

*Procedures Manual
for Minnesota
Statewide Assessments
2023–24*



Academic Standards, Instruction and Assessment
October 2023

Statewide Assessment Websites

| WEBSITE NAME | WEBSITE URL | DESCRIPTION |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Minnesota Department of Education | education.mn.gov | The MDE website includes information for parents/guardians, educators, and District Assessment Coordinators, including testing calendars, user guides for MDE systems, test specifications, and technical reports. |
| Data Submissions Page of the MDE Website | education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/datasub | <p>These MDE systems are used by District Assessment Coordinators and other district staff. Access must be granted for each site separately.</p> <p>Assessment Secure Reports: Secured section of the MDE website for obtaining student, school, and district test data.</p> <p>Test WES: MDE system for a variety of activities before statewide testing begins and after it ends, including working with precode files, providing information for Pretest Editing, performing essential edits for Posttest Editing, and submitting security violations.</p> <p>GRR System: MDE system for requesting reimbursement for students participating in college entrance exams.</p> |
| PearsonAccess Next | minnesota.pearsonaccessnext.com | Districts access user guides, trainings, and student resources on the PearsonAccess Next website. Users sign in to the PearsonAccess Next system to administer the MCA and MTAS, create and manage users, set up test sessions for testing, and access results. |
| WIDA | wida.wisc.edu | Districts access general and Minnesota-specific information about ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS on the WIDA website. Users sign in to the WIDA Secure Portal to create user accounts for staff, access training courses, track staff training completion, and download resources. |
| WIDA AMS | wida-ams.us | Districts access the WIDA Assessment Management System (WIDA AMS) to manage student data and test sessions, order paper test materials, and access score reports for ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS. |
| Testing 1, 2, 3 | testing123.education.mn.gov | Testing 1, 2, 3 is a website that contains a number of resources for assessment and data literacy that can be used and shared with district and school staff who interpret results from the statewide assessments. |

MDE Contacts

400 NE Stinson Blvd, Minneapolis, MN 55413

Email: mde.testing@state.mn.us

TTY users may call the Minnesota Relay Service at 711.

ASSESSMENT ADMINISTRATION AND RESULTS

- District Contact: mde.testing@state.mn.us
- Pearson: MCA and MTAS
 - 888-817-8659; [submit a Pearson help desk request](#)
- WIDA and DRC: ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS
 - WIDA: 866-276-7735; help@wida.us
 - Data Recognition Corporation (DRC): 855-787-9615; WIDA@datarecognitioncorp.com
- Educator Outreach: testing123@state.mn.us

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

- Students with IEPs (Policy): Garrett Petrie, Special Education, (651) 582-8396, garrett.petrie@state.mn.us
- Students with 504 Plans: Carolyn Ellstra, Assistance and Compliance, (651) 582-8689, carolyn.ellstra@state.mn.us
- English Learners with Disabilities: Billy Brooks, (651) 582-8595, billy.brooks@state.mn.us
- Accommodations and Alternate Assessments: See District Contact above under Assessment Administration and Results.

ENGLISH LEARNER (EL) EDUCATION PROGRAM

- EL Programs: (651) 582-8579, mde.el@state.mn.us
- ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS: See District Contact above under Assessment Administration and Results.

ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

- Michael Diedrich, Division of Student Access and Opportunity, (651) 582-8332, mde.essa@state.mn.us

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS (NAEP)

- Jenny Cain, NAEP Coordinator, (651) 582-8218, jennifer.cain@state.mn.us

MINNESOTA AUTOMATED REPORTING STUDENT SYSTEM (MARSS) AND ED-FI

- Marilyn Loehr, MARSS, (651) 582-8456, marss@state.mn.us
- Kari P. Johnson, Ed-Fi, ed-fi.mde@state.mn.us

Important Dates for 2023–24 Test Administration

2023–24 Important Dates for English Language Proficiency Accountability Assessments (ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS) Test Administration

| Event | Dates |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Post district testing calendar to website | No later than Oct. 1 |
| Materials Ordering window in WIDA Assessment Management System (WIDA AMS) to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicate the number of online testers Order paper test materials | Nov. 27–Dec. 15 |
| Deadline for updating student enrollment data for EL students ¹ | Dec. 14 |
| Complete administration tasks in WIDA AMS | Jan. 8–March 22 |
| Receive paper test materials and student labels | Jan. 22 |
| Order additional paper test materials in WIDA AMS | Jan. 22–March 15 |
| TESTING WINDOW (including makeups) | Jan. 29–March 22 |
| Deadline to ship paper test materials to DRC ² | March 29 |
| Posttest Editing in Test WES ³ | May 20–June 7 |

¹ District student enrollment data for EL students is sent to WIDA AMS in precode files and is used for printing student labels and loading students for online testing. This date may be earlier if you use a Student Information Service (SIS) provider; check with your provider for dates. The precode file is sent on Dec. 15 and includes all ELs identified in student enrollment data submitted to MDE.

² For ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, this date must be followed to ensure that all paper tests can be scanned and scored before data is provided to MDE. If scorable test booklets (Kindergarten ACCESS, ACCESS Writing, or WIDA Alternate ACCESS) are not returned by this date, assessment records may not be provided for Posttest Editing, scores may not be available for accountability calculations, and an Individual Student Report (ISR) may not be provided with the shipment of reports.

³ For Test WES, the deadline to complete tasks in Test WES is 10 p.m., as Test WES is unavailable from 10 p.m. until 5 a.m. for nightly system maintenance.

| Event | Dates |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Begin retrieving preliminary early student-level results in Test WES ^{3,4} | May 20 |
| Deadline to update student enrollment data for Posttest Editing ^{3,5} | June 6 |

⁴ Early student-level results are removed one day prior to the posting of embargoed District and School Student Results (DSR/SSR) files in Secure Reports; the date for posting DSR/SSR files will be communicated in the *Important Dates for Results Release* posted to PearsonAccess Next.

⁵ This date may be earlier if you use a student information service provider; check with your provider for dates.

2023–24 Important Dates for Standards-Based Accountability Assessments (MCA and MTAS) Test Administration

| Event | Dates |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Post district testing calendar to website | No later than Oct. 1 |
| Student enrollment data sent in precode files | Nov. 27 |
| Complete Pretest Editing in Test WES ⁶ | Nov. 27–May 2 Nov. 27–May 9 (SCIENCE MCA ONLY) |
| Test WES deadline ⁶ to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make changes affecting initial test materials shipment • Confirm ISR delivery • Indicate test material delivery options | Jan. 19 |
| Student eligibility data sent in precode files | Jan. 19–May 2 Jan. 19–May 9 (SCIENCE MCA ONLY) |
| PearsonAccess Next opens to begin the following tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MCA and MTAS: Create reporting groups • MCA: Set up online and data entry test sessions • MTAS: Assign MTAS Data Entry Users | Feb. 19 |
| Receive MCA paper and MTAS test materials | Feb. 20–22 or Feb. 27–Feb. 29 |
| Order additional MCA paper and MTAS test materials in PearsonAccess Next | Feb. 20–April 30 (noon) Feb. 20–May 7 (noon) (SCIENCE MCA ONLY) |
| Enter Learner Characteristics Inventory (LCI) data in PearsonAccess Next for MTAS ⁷ | Feb. 19–May 3 |
| TESTING WINDOWS (including makeups and data entry)⁸ | March 4–May 3 March 4–May 10 (SCIENCE MCA ONLY) |

⁶For Test WES, the deadline to complete tasks in Test WES is 10 p.m., as Test WES is unavailable from 10 p.m. until 5 a.m. for nightly system maintenance.

⁷Data entry opens ONLY to allow for earlier LCI data entry. No MTAS tests may be administered prior to the MTAS testing window.

⁸Preliminary results are available in On-Demand Reports in PearsonAccess Next after online testing and data entry for MCA and MTAS.

| Event | Dates |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Test WES deadline ⁶ for confirming: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff have completed required trainings • All students taking alternate assessments are eligible • All procedures were followed to provide student supports and accommodations Test WES deadline ⁶ to indicate if district wishes to receive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper copies of ISRs • Student results labels | May 9 |
| Deadline to ship secure MCA paper and MTAS test materials to Pearson | May 13 |
| Posttest Editing in Test WES ⁶ | May 20–June 7 |
| Deadline to update student enrollment data for Posttest Editing ^{6,9} | June 6 |

⁹ This date may be earlier if you use a Student Information Service (SIS) provider; check with your provider for dates.

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Chapter 1 — Introduction

Purpose of This Manual

This *Procedures Manual* has been prepared for District Assessment Coordinators (DACs), administrators, and others with a role in administering Minnesota’s statewide assessments. It provides the Minnesota policies and procedures for implementing statewide assessments and using the results in your district or charter school.

Note: Throughout this manual, the term “district” is used to denote both districts and charter schools.

We have tried to make this manual as definitive as possible, and the procedures within this manual should be followed. However, legislative changes or other policy and procedure changes, as well as suggestions we receive from those who use this manual, require us to revise this manual each year.

There are several ways to use this manual:

- Keep an electronic copy on your computer and make frequent use of the Find function (Ctrl+F, Command+F) or the “jump to” feature in the table of contents to go to a specific chapter or section.
- Print some of the lists to use as checklists.
- Use the *MDE Contacts* page in the front of the manual to find someone who can help you.
- Use the *Important Dates* in the front of the manual to schedule testing in your district and make sure you do not miss an important task.
- Provide specific chapters to district and school staff (for example, special education staff or English learner staff).
- **INFO!** Use the *Document Retention Policy for Districts* in Appendix B as a reference for how long MDE requires districts to keep documentation for statewide assessments, as described throughout the manual.

Educational Equity

The State of Minnesota is committed to educational equity, which is the condition of justice, fairness, and inclusion in our systems of education so that all students have access to opportunities to learn and grow. Creating equitable opportunities is dependent upon having inclusive policies and practices that represent all students and provide each student increased access to, and meaningful participation in, high-quality learning experiences where they can realize positive outcomes. The Academic Standards, Instruction and Assessment division supports this commitment through the creation and administration of statewide assessments, and by providing reliable data and supporting district use of it in regards to student learning of the applicable standards: the Minnesota Academic Standards and WIDA English Language Development Standards. Statewide assessment results provide an important function in our education system, as they can help identify opportunity and access gaps between student groups, help determine where educational resources are needed, and provide insights for targeted support to ensure all students have access to a high-quality and equitable education, regardless of race, zip code, and prior lived experiences.

Communication

Clarifications and updates between publications of this *Procedures Manual*, as well as important reminders, will be published in the weekly *Assessment Update*. DACs and District Technology Coordinators indicated in [MDE-ORG](#) automatically receive the weekly *Assessment Update*. Others interested in receiving the *Assessment Update* may email their name and email address to mde.testing@state.mn.us.

The Academic Standards, Instruction and Assessment division also distributes the following newsletters.

- The monthly *Educator Edition* newsletter provides timely information regarding standards-based instruction resources, including professional development opportunities. The target audience is educators and curriculum directors. All Curriculum Directors in MDE-ORG and prior recipients of the *Testing 1, 2, 3 Newsletter* (which preceded this newsletter) automatically receive it.
- The *Academic Standards, Instruction and Assessment Newsletter* is the division's semi-annual newsletter. It is intended to help strengthen schools and districts in their implementation of the Minnesota K–12 Academic Standards and the WIDA English Language Development Standards. Its articles cover all content areas and strive to support local, balanced, and comprehensive assessment systems. The target audience is Curriculum Directors and DACs who receive it automatically if indicated in MDE-ORG as one of these roles.

To subscribe to the *Educator Edition* or the *Academic Standards, Instruction and Assessment Newsletter*, refer to the [District, Schools and Educators Statewide Testing](#) page under Communication (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing). All of the newsletters will also be posted on the [PearsonAccess Next](#) website under the MDE Updates tab (PearsonAccess Next > MDE Updates).

Information for District Assessment Coordinators

In addition to this *Procedures Manual*, there are many DAC resources available on the service provider websites and on the [District Resources](#) page of the MDE website (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > District Resources (under the District Assessment Coordinator Resources expandable heading)). These resources are reviewed annually, and there are a number of resources developed specifically for new DACs.

- New DACs should begin with the *New District Assessment Coordinators: Getting Access* document, which provides instructions for being designated as a DAC and establishing DAC-level accounts in service provider systems (Pearson, WIDA, and WIDA AMS) and relevant MDE systems.
- Other resources for new DACs are introduced during New DAC Orientation training in the fall. They are meant to be used as quick reference guides to support DACs in their daily work.

Service Providers

Pearson

Pearson is the service provider for the standards-based accountability assessments: Reading, Mathematics, and Science Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs) and Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS).

For questions regarding online testing in TestNav or PearsonAccess Next, contact the Pearson help desk:

- [Submit a Pearson help desk request](#). Pearson uses an online form to collect questions. Use the link to submit a support ticket; the link is also available on PearsonAccess Next > [Support](#).
- Phone: 888-817-8659
- Hours of operation: Monday–Friday, 6 a.m.–7:30 p.m.
- Website: Districts access user guides, trainings, and student resources on the [PearsonAccess Next](#) website (minnesota.pearsonaccessnext.com). Users sign in to the PearsonAccess Next system to administer the MCA and MTAS, create and manage users, set up test sessions for testing, and access results.

WIDA

Minnesota is a member of the WIDA Consortium. As a member, Minnesota districts administer the ACCESS for ELLs (ACCESS) and WIDA Alternate ACCESS assessments to all English learners in grades K–12. WIDA is the service provider for ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS. WIDA has subcontracted with Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) to support administration of the assessments. Please contact the applicable Help Desk with questions:

- WIDA: Contact WIDA for questions on access to the WIDA Secure Portal, training, interpreting score reports, and WIDA resources.
 - Email: help@wida.us
 - Phone: 866-276-7735
 - Hours of operation:
 - November–March: Monday–Thursday, 7 a.m.–7 p.m.; Friday, 7 a.m.–5 p.m.
 - April–October: Monday–Friday, 7 a.m.–5 p.m.
 - Website: The [WIDA website](#) (wida.wisc.edu) is used to access training courses for ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS test administration, technology, and reporting resources; for some resources, users must log in to the WIDA Secure Portal.
- DRC: Contact DRC for questions on WIDA Assessment Management System (WIDA AMS) functionality, WIDA AMS accounts, ordering paper test materials, technology support for online test software, and reports:
 - Email: WIDA@datarecognitioncorp.com

- Phone: 855-787-9615
- Hours of operation: Monday–Friday, 6 a.m.–8 p.m.
- Website: [WIDA AMS](#) is used for managing student data and test sessions, ordering paper test materials, and accessing score reports for ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS.

Accessing MDE Secure Systems

MDE’s secure systems that are related to assessment include Test WES, Assessment Secure Reports, Graduation Requirements Records (GRR), MARSS WES, and Student Identity Validation Interface. The district’s DAC typically has access to Test WES, Assessment Secure Reports, and the GRR system, while the district’s MARSS coordinator typically has access to MARSS WES and the Student Identity Validation Interface; however, this arrangement may vary in some districts. Use the *New District Assessment Coordinators: Getting Access* document posted on the [Districts, Schools and Educator Statewide Testing](#) page of the MDE website for information on access and authorization for MDE secure systems (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > District Resources (under the District Assessment Coordinator Resources expandable heading)). Test WES, Assessment Secure Reports, and GRR are described in chapters throughout the manual according to the tasks and timelines when a DAC accesses them.

Comments and Suggestions

Comments, suggestions, and feedback for improvement are valuable to the growth and effectiveness of the assessment program. MDE and our service providers continually work to improve testing procedures for future administrations. To send feedback to MDE, email mde.testing@state.mn.us.

New for 2023–24

Symbols are used throughout the manual to help call attention to new information or updates. These symbols are searchable: use the Find function (Ctrl+F, Command+F) to search for either “new!” or “info!” throughout the manual. Tip: Using the exclamation (!) with the word will narrow results only to symbols.

- The **NEW!** symbol indicates changes or additions to policies and procedures in this edition of the manual. This section also summarizes these changes, but it is important to read them in the context of the other information in the manual to understand the changes; chapter references are included to aid in this review.
- The **INFO!** symbol is used to indicate clarifications of existing policies and procedures throughout the manual; however, clarifications are not summarized in this chapter as they must be read within the relevant chapters to fully illustrate what has changed. Many of these clarifications were provided in the *Assessment Update* in the past school year (after last year’s *Procedures Manual* was published).

Assessments

- A transition period is beginning for statewide assessments. As the standards to which the assessments are aligned change, the assessments themselves must also change, beginning with the WIDA Alternate ACCESS this year and additional standards-based and English language proficiency accountability assessments in the upcoming years (Chapter 2).
- The revised WIDA Alternate ACCESS is aligned to the WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework: 2020 Edition and is now available in Kindergarten (Chapter 2).
- The updated WIDA Alternate ACCESS contains an Individual Characteristics Questionnaire (ICQ). ICQ information will be reported on the individual student score report to help educators make reclassification decisions about students taking WIDA Alternate ACCESS. MDE recommends that educators complete the entire ICQ for each student participating in the WIDA Alternate ACCESS.
- Revisions to Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.30 removed the requirement to include off-grade items in the grades 3–8 Reading and Mathematics MCAs. These items have been removed beginning this school year (Chapters 2 and 7).
- In order to ensure student data privacy, the parent/guardian review of statewide assessments policy has been updated to have the parent/guardian request the review through the district where the student is currently enrolled. The deadline for parents/guardians to make a request has also been updated from Jan. 1 to March 1 in order to provide more time to submit a request based on the receipt of the ISR (Chapter 11).

Test Security and Monitoring/Audits

- With the expansion of the Assessment Security Records (ASR) system in Test WES, ASR is replacing the Test Security Notification (TSN) terminology. To report a security violation to MDE, a DAC will now create an ASR (Chapter 5).
- Due to test security and increased incidents of plagiarism, MDE requires districts to follow WIDA's recommendations for group sizes for Writing (no more than 15 students) and Speaking (no more than 5 students) (Chapter 7).
 - These requirements have been added to the district test security procedure requirements and the *Minnesota Statewide Assessments Monitoring List* (Chapter 5).
- A new reason has been added to the list of potential reasons school sites may be a required site for an MTAS audit: not administering field test tasks.
- If a student-owned device is used for student online testing, the test must be invalidated (Chapter 7).
- The sample Medical Excuse documentation form in Appendix A has been updated to include additional information the district completes as part of the documentation (Chapter 9 and Appendix A).

Training

- The Learning Management System (LMS), accessed from the PearsonAccess Next website, has replaced the Training Management System (TMS) (Chapter 7).

- The *Online ACCESS for ELLs: Administration* and *Paper ACCESS for ELLs: Administration* training courses have been updated to reflect changes in WIDA AMS and have been redesigned to be more user-friendly and accessible. The *Alternate ACCESS: Administration and Scoring* training course has also been updated in preparation for the first year of the redesigned WIDA Alternate ACCESS. Training requirements are outlined in Chapter 7.
- A training module specific to monitoring and audits has been added to the New DAC Training Series available in LMS (Chapter 7).

Universal Supports and Accommodations

- The *Guidance for Universal Supports and Accommodations for Minnesota Statewide Assessments* is a new resource and a companion document to Chapter 4. It is specifically for district staff who are involved in making decisions on universal supports and/or accommodations for statewide testing, and DACs should ensure that staff involved in that process are provided this resource. The *Guidelines for Administration of Accommodations* is no longer posted as a separate stand-alone document on PearsonAccess Next, and the information is now included in the *Guidance* (Chapter 4).
- MDE has reorganized how supports and accommodations are presented for statewide assessments. This new framework replaces the former categorization (general supports, linguistic supports, and accommodations). While there are now only two main categories—universal supports and accommodations—additional subcategories have been used to better organize and describe available supports (Chapter 4).
- For the universal support of translated directions, written translations of the scripted directions may be provided to students. Consideration should be given to the student’s literacy in that language and the use of written translations as a support in daily instruction (Chapters 4 and 8).
- The MCA accommodation that allows students to read and record the reading test for later playback is now limited to a student with an IEP or 504 plan. While previously allowed for multilingual learners, it is not a common strategy used in English learner instruction (Chapter 4).

Administration

- District testing calendars must be posted by districts at least one week prior to any eligible assessments being administered but no later than Oct. 1 (Chapter 6).
- The decision to administer the ACCESS Paper should be based on an individual consideration of the student’s familiarity with the technology used in the online testing platform. This guidance has been updated to better address student proficiency with technology instead of language proficiency (Chapter 4).
- For Kindergarten ACCESS, if it is estimated by an individual student’s IEP team that they will require more than two sessions to complete the assessment, districts must contact MDE to request approval. For WIDA Alternate ACCESS, if it is estimated by an individual student’s IEP team that they will require more than two days to complete any single domain, districts must contact MDE to request approval (Chapter 7).

- For MCA, the Student Readiness Tools (SRTs) have replaced the item samplers and student tutorials as the resources used to familiarize students with the assessments they will be taking (Chapter 7).
- The TestNav scratch pad tool has replaced the notepad tool for online MCA (Chapter 4).

Reporting

- Standard setting will take place in 2023–24 following the administration of the WIDA Alternate ACCESS, which will delay the reporting of results. Additional details about related reports and resources for 2023–24 will be provided as they are made available from WIDA (Chapter 11).
 - Early results will not be provided this year for WIDA Alternate ACCESS.
 - WIDA Alternate ACCESS test results from past years should not be compared to results from 2023–24 and forward, as the assessment is measuring different standards and has been revised.
 - Proficiency level scores will describe a student’s performance in terms of the five WIDA Alternate English Language Proficiency Levels: 1—Entering, 2—Emerging, 3—Developing, 4—Expanding, and 5—Bridging.
- A new resource, *Participation Calculations for Statewide Assessments*, provides detailed information on assessment participation calculations (Chapter 9).
- A new resource, *Understanding Student Progress on the MCA*, provides information about using MCA data to look at student progress (Chapter 11).
- Beginning in 2023, the following reporting changes are now in place (Chapter 11):
 - Personalized student Individual Student Report (ISR) videos with MCA and MTAS results are available as a resource.
 - MCA and MTAS student results labels can also be printed from PearsonAccess Next.
 - MDE reports student results using eight state-defined racial and ethnic groups, including the state definition of American Indian and the new Other Indigenous group.

Chapter 2 — Overview of Statewide Assessments

Overview

This chapter focuses on the assessments administered as part of statewide testing in Minnesota, the standards-based and English language proficiency accountability assessments, and other required assessments (college entrance exams for career and college readiness and National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)). The process of building an assessment in Minnesota is described in Appendix B. Local testing time limitations are described at the end of this chapter.

Balanced and Comprehensive System of Assessment

Before discussing details of the statewide assessments, it is important to discuss the purpose and role of different types of assessments in a district’s balanced, comprehensive assessment system. Assessments are typically designed to collect evidence for a specific purpose, and there is no single assessment that can be used to support all needs or purposes.

- Classroom assessments can be formative and summative, since they are either administered during student learning or after a period of instruction. Data from formative assessments are most useful to teachers and students for adjusting learning and instruction in the moment, or during a unit of instruction, while summative classroom assessments are typically used to report or certify learning for grading purposes.
- Districtwide assessments—sometimes referred to as interim or benchmark assessments—are administered across classrooms or schools periodically throughout the school year. Data from interim assessments are most useful to groups of teachers and school leaders for long-term instructional planning, to identify specific interventions, or to allocate resources.
- Statewide assessments are standardized summative assessments that are administered annually. Data from statewide assessments are most useful to school and district leaders when evaluating curriculum and program alignment to standards.

Assessments should work together in a cohesive system that produces data documenting student progress toward meaningful learning targets based on the standards. For more information about assessment types and assessment systems, refer to the information and resources available on the [Balanced Assessment Systems](#) page of the Testing 1, 2, 3 website (Testing 1, 2, 3 > Assess > Balanced Assessment Systems). In addition, explore the activities and resources in the Strand 1 modules of the Minnesota Data and Assessment Literacy (MnDAL) online learning course available on the [On-Demand Learning](#) page of the Testing 1, 2, 3 website (Testing 1, 2, 3 > Get Involved > On-Demand Learning).

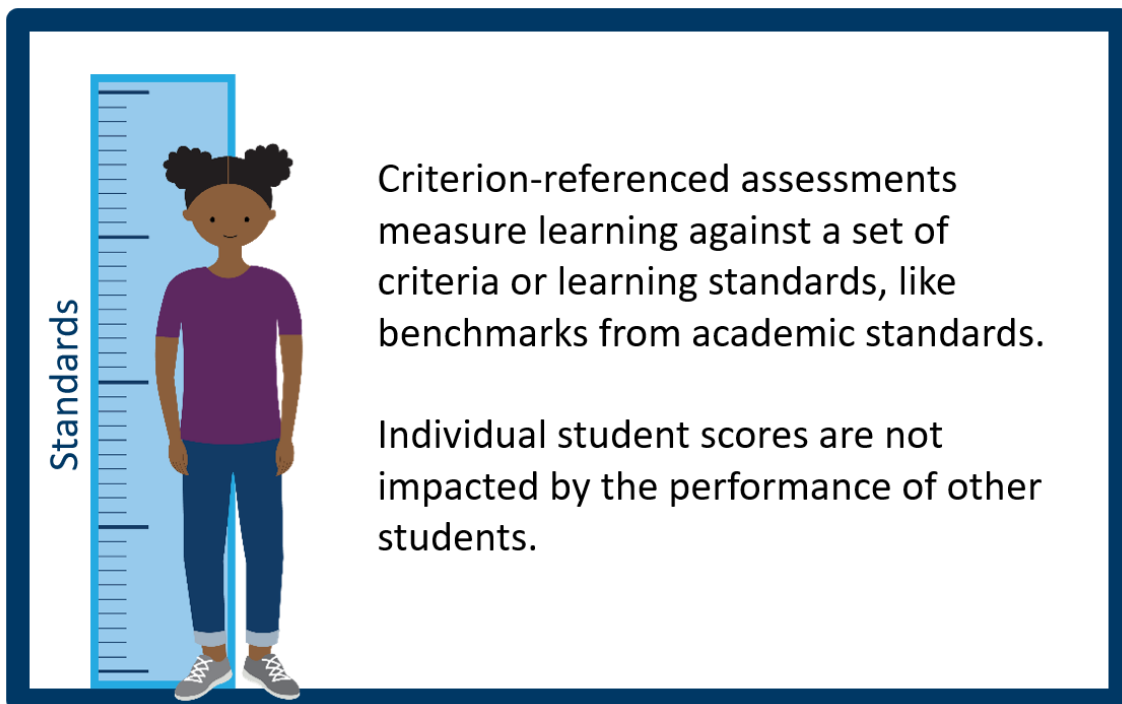
Minnesota's Statewide Assessments

The statewide assessments administered in Minnesota are designed to provide a snapshot of student learning of the applicable standards: progress towards proficiency as described by the WIDA English Language Development Standards (for English language proficiency accountability assessments) and learning of the grade-level Minnesota Academic Standards (for the standards-based accountability assessments).

- For the English language proficiency accountability assessments, refer to the [ELD Standards Framework](#) page of the WIDA website for information about how to connect language development and academic content (WIDA > Teach > Teaching with Standards > English Language Development Standards Framework).
- For the standards-based accountability assessments, refer to the [Academic Standards \(K–12\)](#) page of the MDE website (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Academic Standards (K–12)).

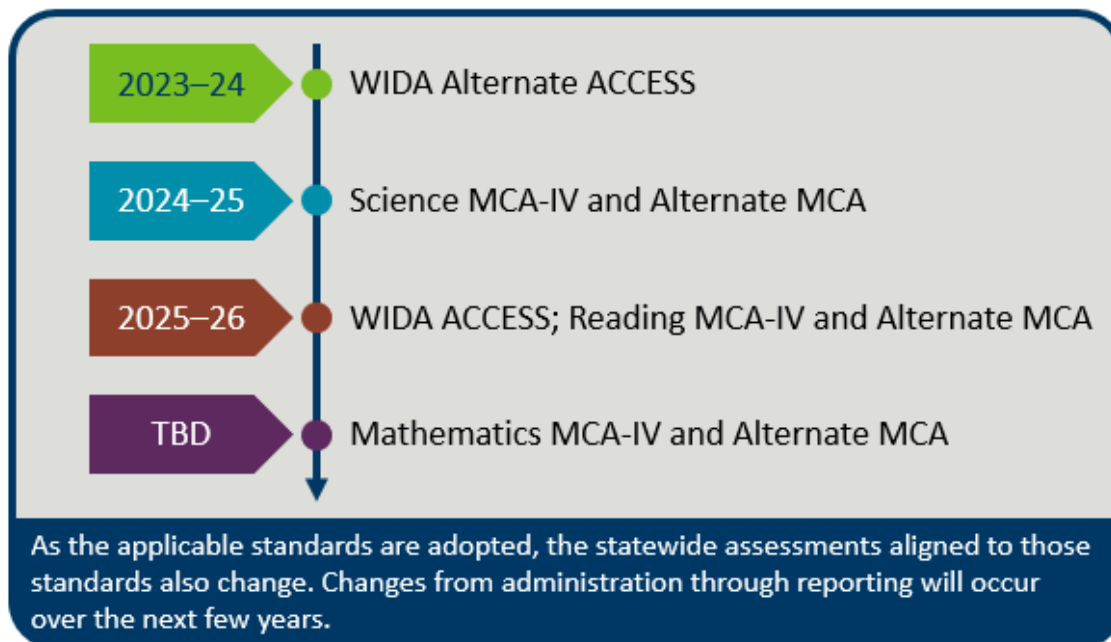
The statewide assessments are criterion-referenced assessments, which means they measure performance against a fixed set of criteria: the WIDA English Language Development Standards or the Minnesota Academic Standards. Criterion-referenced assessments are used to determine student learning of concepts and skills defined in the standards. While criterion-referenced tests may provide information about the extent to which students have learned certain concepts, they alone do not illustrate the whole picture of what a student has learned. These assessments provide one data point that should be considered in the context of additional evidence of student learning, such as student projects and assignments, and other data from the district's comprehensive assessment system.

Figure 1: Criterion-Referenced Assessments



NEW! A transition period is beginning for statewide assessments. As the standards to which the assessments are aligned change, the assessments themselves must also change. Figure 2 shows a timeline of changes to assessments that will be occurring. More details are included throughout this chapter and the manual.

Figure 2: Changes to Minnesota’s Statewide Assessments



English Language Proficiency Accountability Assessments

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)) and Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.59 require that all English learners be assessed in grades K–12 in English language proficiency. ACCESS for ELLs (ACCESS) and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, developed by the multi-state WIDA Consortium, are used to meet this federal requirement. Most English learners take the ACCESS, but students who receive special education services and meet the participation criteria may take the WIDA Alternate ACCESS instead.

The primary purpose of the English language proficiency accountability assessments is to measure progress toward proficiency as described by the WIDA English Language Development Standards. The WIDA English Language Development Standards represent the social, instructional, and academic language that students need to engage with peers, educators, and their school curriculum. These standards can be understood as “language instruction through academic content” whereas academic content standards, like the Minnesota Academic Standards, can be understood as “content instruction through language.” **INFO!** Minnesota educators are in the process of implementing the WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework: 2020 Edition. The 2023–24 WIDA Alternate ACCESS is an updated assessment aligned to the 2020 Edition. The ACCESS will be aligned to the 2020 Edition in 2025–26. For more information about Minnesota’s implementation of the WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework: 2020 Edition, refer to the [English Language Development Standards](#) page of the MDE website (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > English Learner Education > English Language Development Standards).

What the ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS measure in the expressive domains is a student’s ability to speak, write, and represent information about academic topics; however, they are not assessing whether the academic content of the response is factually correct or incorrect. For example, a student who writes a number of complex and varied sentences that demonstrate skillful academic vocabulary usage and a high degree of linguistic control, yet may have gotten some of the facts wrong or out of order, will score higher on ACCESS Writing than a student who writes a limited number of simple sentences with little academic vocabulary usage and developing linguistic control (for example, grammatical errors), yet recounts all the facts correctly and in order.

In addition to measuring progress towards meeting the WIDA English Language Development Standards, schools use ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS scores to determine if a student is ready to exit a Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP). For more information about exiting and reclassification, refer to the [English Learner Education](#) page of the MDE website (MDE website > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > English Learner Education).



The purpose of the ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS is to measure progress toward proficiency as described by the WIDA English Language Development Standards and to determine if individual students are ready to exit their English language development programs.

ACCESS for ELLs

The ACCESS is a K–12 English language proficiency accountability assessment based on the WIDA English Language Development Standards. The ACCESS assesses four language domains: Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing. While the Kindergarten ACCESS is paper-based, ACCESS for grades 1–12 is administered primarily online. Information on test formats and grade-level clusters can be found in Table 1.

For ACCESS Online grades 1–12, the Listening and Reading domains are adaptive, which means that the next item a student receives is based on their performance earlier in the test. Because of this, students must answer each Listening and Reading item to continue and may not go back to review previous responses. The Speaking and Writing domains are not adaptive and will not adjust depending on the student’s performance. Instead, the Speaking and Writing domains are tiered, meaning that the items on different tiered forms target specific proficiency levels. For Speaking, students cannot go back once they record a response. For Writing, students must enter a keystroke to continue but can go back to previous questions during the administration. Refer to *Writing Domain Considerations* in Chapter 8 for additional information, as some ACCESS Online grade-bands use Writing test booklets.

WIDA Alternate ACCESS

The WIDA Alternate ACCESS is an individually administered English language proficiency accountability assessment developed specifically for English learners who have significant cognitive disabilities. **NEW!** The WIDA Alternate ACCESS is aligned to the WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework: 2020 Edition. Participation is limited to students who are eligible based on the *WIDA Alternate ACCESS Participation*

Criteria Decision Tree, which is available on the [WIDA Alternate ACCESS](#) page of the WIDA website (WIDA > Assess > WIDA Alternate Access).

The WIDA Alternate ACCESS assesses four language domains: Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing. The test is a paper-based assessment. Information on grade-level clusters can be found in Table 1. **NEW!** The WIDA Alternate ACCESS is available for eligible kindergarten students. For more information on the updated WIDA Alternate ACCESS, refer to the [WIDA Alternate ACCESS Updates](#) page of the WIDA website.

Table 1. 2023–24 English Language Proficiency Accountability Assessments Overview

| Test | Grade-Level Clusters | Format | Description |
|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Kindergarten ACCESS | K | Paper | The Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing domains are assessed within the context of two stories. The test is individually administered, and materials include manipulatives and an activity board. The test is scored by the Test Administrator. |
| ACCESS for ELLs Online | 1 2–3 | Online (Listening, Reading, and Speaking) Paper (Writing; both prompt and response are in a Writing test booklet) | The Listening and Reading domains are adaptive tests that contain multiple-choice and technology-enhanced items. The Speaking and Writing domains are not adaptive but are tiered, meaning that the items on different forms target specific proficiency levels. For the Speaking domain, students respond by speaking into a microphone and recording their responses. The Writing domain contains a set of tasks to which students respond. |
| ACCESS for ELLs Online | 4–5 | Online (Listening, Reading, and Speaking; for Writing, the prompt is viewed online) Paper (Writing; the prompt is viewed online and the student responds in a Writing test booklet) | |
| ACCESS for ELLs Online | 6–8 9–12 | Online (Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing) | |

| Test | Grade-Level Clusters | Format | Description |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ACCESS for ELLs Paper | 1 2 3 4–5 6–8 9–12 | Paper (Listening, Reading, and Writing) | The ACCESS Paper is a semi-adaptive test that is available as an accommodation for eligible students. Refer to <i>Accommodations for English Language Proficiency Accountability Assessments</i> in Chapter 4 for additional information. The Listening, Reading, and Writing domains can be administered in group or individual settings. |
| ACCESS for ELLs Paper | 1 2–3 4–5 6–8 9–12 | Paper (Speaking) | The Speaking domain is administered individually and scored by the Test Administrator. |
| WIDA Alternate ACCESS | K–2 3–5 6–8 9–12 | Paper (Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing) | The Listening and Reading domains contain selected response items, and the Speaking and Writing domains contain constructed response items. The domains are individually administered, and all sections are scored by the Test Administrator. |

Standards-Based Accountability Assessments

ESSA and Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.30 require that public school students be assessed annually in reading, mathematics, and science.

- Students enrolled in grades 3–8 and 10 take a reading test.
- Students enrolled in grades 3–8 and 11 take a mathematics test.
- Students enrolled in grades 5 and 8 take a science test. High school students also take a science test the year in which they complete their life science instruction (usually a biology course). Refer to the *Science MCA Details* section below for additional guidance.

Most students take the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs), but students who receive special education services and meet the Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS) eligibility requirements may take the MTAS in place of the MCA. More information about MTAS eligibility is provided in the *MTAS Participation* section of this chapter. Students take one test (MCA or MTAS) in each subject.

The primary purpose of the standards-based accountability assessments is to measure student learning of the Minnesota Academic Standards, to which both the MCA and MTAS are aligned. As academic standards are revised, a new series of assessments is developed to align with the updated standards. In MDE’s official documents and test data, the series number is added—at least in the initial reference—to indicate the academic content standards that are being measured (for example, MCA-III designates the mathematics academic

standards adopted in 2007). Table 2 shows the academic standards to which the current assessments are aligned and the transition to new standards. The Alternate MCA, a redesigned alternate assessment in place of MTAS, will also be administered in the same years as the applicable MCA-IV. The *Building a Test* procedure in Appendix B contains the schedule for the revision of academic standards.



The purpose of the MCA and MTAS is to measure student learning of the Minnesota Academic Standards.

Table 2. Standards-Based Accountability Assessments Overview and Standards Alignment

| Subject | Administered in Grades | Academic Standards Assessed on MCA-III and MTAS | Last Administration of MCA-III and MTAS | Academic Standards Assessed on MCA-IV and Alternate MCA-IV | First Administration of MCA-IV and Alternate MCA-IV |
|-------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Reading | 3–8, 10 | 2010 Standards | Spring 2025 | 2020 Standards | Spring 2026 |
| Mathematics | 3–8, 11 | 2007 Standards | TBD | 2022 Standards | TBD |
| Science | 5, 8, High School* | 2009 Standards | Spring 2024 | 2019 Standards | Spring 2025 |

* Students in grades 9–12 take the Science MCA or Science MTAS once in high school.

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) Overview

The Reading, Mathematics, and Science MCAs are primarily administered online, with paper test materials available only for eligible students (refer to Chapter 4 for additional information). In order for paper tests to be scored and reported, the district must enter the student responses online during the testing window.

NEW! Revisions to Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.30 removed the requirement to include off-grade items in the grades 3–8 Reading and Mathematics MCAs. These items have been removed beginning this school year (2023–24).

The Minnesota Questions Tool (MQT) is available on the [Released MCA Questions](#) page of the Testing 1, 2, 3 website (Testing 1, 2, 3 > Assess > Released MCA Questions). The MQT contains released test questions from past MCAs as well as data about each item. Educators can use these test questions to better understand how the MCA is aligned to the Minnesota K–12 Academic Standards and how the items are written to reflect the varied rigor and complexity of the standards. The released content, data tables, and rationales do not reflect content proportions on the MCA, but they can be used to explore examples of questions that evaluate the knowledge and skills expected in the standards. **INFO!** Refer to the [Plan and Teach](#) section of the Testing 1, 2,

3 website for additional resources to support grade-level instructional planning aligned to the academic standards.

Adaptive and Fixed-Form Assessments

The Reading and Mathematics MCAs are **adaptive** assessments, which means that each item (for mathematics) or passage(s) with associated items (for reading) is selected based on student performance on items taken earlier in the test. This produces an individualized assessment that is well-tailored to measure each student's proficiency, while still meeting the test specifications. This means that even though the test will adapt to each student's performance, the material presented will correspond to the overall test specifications. While students are not presented with the same items, scores are comparable because each test measures the content and standards defined in the test specifications.

The Science MCA is a **fixed-form** assessment, which means that items are pre-selected. While students are presented with the same operational items (or, items that count toward their score), there are multiple forms of the test and the placement of these items varies between forms. These items are selected to meet the content requirements from the test specifications.

Additional details by subject are included in the sections that follow, and detailed information on scheduling testing by subject is included in Chapter 7. Further information about adaptive and fixed-form assessments are included in the *Technical Manual for Minnesota's Statewide Assessments* posted on the [Technical Reports](#) page of the MDE website under the Technical Manual expandable heading (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > Technical Reports).

Reading MCA Details

- The Reading MCA is an adaptive assessment that adjusts to each student's performance at the testlet level. A testlet is a group of one or more passages and their corresponding items. A student's responses on a set of items associated with a passage or passages determine the next passage(s) and associated items the student receives. A student may review their responses to items in each testlet before moving to the next testlet. Because the selection of each successive testlet is based on the responses to all the items within the current testlet and any previous testlets, any changes made to items during review will affect the next testlet the student receives.
- Items are associated with a reading passage. Each item appears on its own page with the passage on the left so students always have direct access to the passage. Title pages appear at the beginning of each passage, and students know they have completed a passage when they get to the title page for the next passage or see a review screen at the end of a group of items. If there are two passage titles on the title page, the next set of items is associated with a text set (a pair of passages), which means there will be one set of items associated with two passages. There are 6–10 passages (operational and field test) in the Reading MCA; because the Reading MCA is adaptive, the number and length of passages each student receives will vary.
- The Reading MCA is divided into groups of testlets. Once a student finishes a testlet and moves on to the next, they are no longer able to go back and review items or change answers in a previous testlet. This feature limits the number of items a student may review, which is important for both test security and the construction of the adaptive testlets.

- The Reading MCA contains multiple-choice items and technology-enhanced items. For technology-enhanced items, students may manipulate reading content, such as demonstrating a sequence of actions or events, making connections between a cause and its effect, and choosing supporting details of a main idea. Students may use the [Student Readiness Tools](#) to become familiar with the test they will be taking (PearsonAccess Next > Preparing for Testing > Student Readiness Tools); refer to Chapter 7 for additional information about student resources.

Mathematics MCA Details

- The Mathematics MCA is an adaptive assessment that adjusts to each student’s performance at an item level. This means that every time a student answers an item, that response, and any previous responses, determines the next item the student receives. Items are arranged in a series of groups within the test to limit the number of items a student may review, which is important for both test security and test construction (for example, to separate calculator and non-calculator items for grades 3–8). As students review and change answers to items within a group, the next item a student receives will be based on any response changes the student makes (for example, changing a response to item 1 after answering through item 5 may affect what a student receives for item 6). When moving to an item in a new group, the first item in the group is determined by all previous responses from previous groups.
- For the Mathematics MCA, students may stop anywhere within a group of items and resume testing on another day; test security is maintained because students cannot go back to previously completed items after exiting for 20 minutes.
- The Mathematics MCA contains multiple-choice items and technology-enhanced items. For technology-enhanced items, students may drag and drop a graphic or text from one location to another, select responses from a list of words and phrases or from within a graphic, enter numbers for an answer, or manipulate a graph. Students have access to an online calculator when allowed and, in grades 5–8 and 11, can use the grade-level online formula sheet that is available on every item. Students may use the [Student Readiness Tools](#) to become familiar with the test they will be taking (PearsonAccess Next > Preparing for Testing > Student Readiness Tools); refer to Chapter 7 for additional information about student resources.

Science MCA Details

- The Science MCA is a fixed-form test, which means all students take the same operational items (in other words, the items that count toward their score). Since all items are pre-selected, any changes that students make to their responses during review will have no effect on subsequent items a student will receive. Items are grouped into four sections.
- In the Science MCA, items are associated with a scenario, and each scenario is made up of multiple parts. For each item, the relevant part of the scenario will appear on the left side of the page. Title pages appear at the beginning of each scenario, and students will know they have completed a scenario when they get to the title page for the next scenario or see a review screen at the end of a section.
 - Note: For Science MCA-IV, the stimuli will be based on phenomena, which are observable events occurring in the universe that can be explained or predicted with scientific reasoning. The text, graphics, animations, or simulations included in the phenomenon provide context for students as

they engage in the items. For MCA-IV, the items will be organized within phenomena instead of scenarios.

- There are approximately 15–16 scenarios/phenomena (operational and field test) in the Science MCA. The number varies each year depending on the number of items per scenario as the tests are constructed.
- The Science MCA contains both multiple-choice items and technology-enhanced items. For technology-enhanced items, students drag and drop a graphic or text from one location to another, select responses from a list of words and phrases or from within a graphic, enter numbers or letters for an answer, or manipulate a graph. Students have access to an online calculator when it is applicable for an item. The Science MCA also includes simulations as part of the test, which are one or more scenes within a scenario that require students to manipulate variables and then use the results to answer items.
 - In preparation for MCA-IV, MDE continues to field test new test designs and item types, including 1) the presentation of information on multiple tabs on the same page, and 2) the use of constructed-response items, where students answer the question by writing a response.
 - Field test items do not count toward a student’s score, but it is critical that students are familiar with these new elements and complete them to the best of their abilities. Field testing is the process MDE uses to develop and construct tests for future years; as with all items, field test items are considered secure content, and the same test security procedures apply to them. All new test designs and item types are part of the [Student Readiness Tools](#) (PearsonAccess Next > Preparing for Testing > Student Readiness Tools); refer to Chapter 7 for additional information about student resources.
- Students in grades 9–12 take the Science MCA once in high school.
 - The high school Science MCA covers the grades 9–12 Minnesota Academic Standards in Life Science (Strand 4) and the Nature of Science and Engineering in the context of life science (Strand 1).
 - These standards for high school science are typically addressed in one year of life science/biology instruction. Each district determines which coursework covers Strand 1 and Strand 4, and the high school Science MCA is administered during the year that coursework is completed.
 - Since the test is administered to students in the school year when the applicable coursework is completed, the following situations provide information on whether a student is required to test:
 - Students who transfer to a new district and have already completed their life science/biology coursework in the previous district will not take the high school assessment in the new district. This is true even if the student did not take the Science MCA previously, because the new district did not provide the life science/biology instruction.
 - Students who are retaking their life science/biology coursework must take the Science MCA again, even if they took it previously (this includes students who retake their coursework during the summer or are in a credit recovery or other similar type of program). Retaking the test in a year when they are successfully completing or have completed the coursework can provide the district with information about the course effectiveness and instruction.
 - If the district determines that the student will likely not pass the course, they also determine whether to still administer the test that year or wait until the course is retaken the following

school year. If in doubt about when the student will complete coursework, the student should participate in the assessment. If the student completes the coursework over the summer (for example, credit recovery), the student should participate the following year.

- Note: Students who were unable to take the High School Science MCA in 2019–20 or 2020–21 due to COVID-19 will not take the assessment in any other year. The only exception to this would be if they are retaking their life science/biology coursework.

Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS) Overview

The MTAS is a performance-based assessment in reading, mathematics, and science for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, and it is available in every grade in which the MCA is available. The MTAS is an alternate assessment based on extended standards of the Minnesota Academic Standards that have been reduced in breadth, depth, and complexity. MTAS test materials include Task Administration Manuals, Presentation Pages, and Response Option Cards that incorporate the use of pictures and graphics. The Reading MTAS includes brief passages that may be read aloud to students, and the Mathematics and Science MTAS include object lists that provide guidance on the use of objects or manipulatives for students who need this type of support. A separate Passages and Phenomena Book is also provided for grades completing reading and/or science. This book includes materials used to present Alternate MCA field test tasks to students for reading and science.

Test Administrators score each task using a rubric embedded in the task script, and district staff must enter this data online during the testing window for each subject in order for the test to be scored. Since the service provider does not score MTAS tests, it is the district’s responsibility to enter this data for reporting. The MTAS Data Collection Form is available on the [User Guides](#) page of the PearsonAccess Next website (PearsonAccess Next > Resources & Training > User Guides).

Administration of the Alternate MCA, a redesigned alternate assessment in place of MTAS, will begin starting with science in 2024–25 and reading in 2025–26; mathematics is still to be determined. The Reading MTAS and Science MTAS for the current testing year include Alternate MCA field test items to prepare for the new assessment. Table 3 outlines the number of operational tasks (the tasks that count for student scores) and field test tasks by subject. Refer to the [Alternate Assessments](#) page of the Testing 1, 2, 3 website for additional information about the transition to the Alternate MCA (Testing 1, 2, 3 > Assess > Alternate Assessments).

Table 3. 2023–24 Alternate Assessment Task Overview

| Subject | Number of Operational Tasks | Number of Field Test Tasks | Total Number of Tasks |
|-------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Reading | 9 | 6 | 15 |
| Mathematics | 9 | 0 | 9 |
| Science | 9 | 6 | 15 |

While redesigned tasks in the Science and Reading MTAS do not count toward a student’s score, it is critical that Test Administrators are familiar with how to administer them and record student responses; field testing is the

process MDE uses to develop and construct tests for future years. As with all tasks, field test tasks are required to be administered and are considered secure content, and the same test security procedures also apply to them. Information will be provided in the MTAS Test Administrator trainings to familiarize Test Administrators with the new task formats and how to record student responses. All tasks, including field test tasks, must be administered and are designed to be administered in order.

MTAS Participation

Participation on the MTAS is limited to students whose IEP team determines that the student meets the *Eligibility Requirements for the Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS)* available on the [Minnesota Tests](#) page of the MDE website (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > Minnesota Tests). The same considerations as the Science MCA apply when determining which high school students will take the Science MTAS. While some students with significant cognitive disabilities may not be enrolled in a course called life science or biology, they should have access to the general education curriculum, which includes life science instruction. The IEP team determines the most appropriate year for a high school student to take the Science MTAS.

Districts are annually required to complete an Assurance, Rationale, and Context (ARC) response to provide information, assurances, and where appropriate, narratives regarding alternate assessment participation rates.

- The purpose of the ARC response is to provide a communication tool between Minnesota districts and MDE assuring each district is identifying the most appropriate assessment for each student.
- Special Education Directors, District Assessment Coordinators, Special Education case managers, and other key district staff should provide input in conversations about the completion of the ARC response.
- The Alternate Assessment Participation report, available in [Assessment Secure Reports](#), provides historic MTAS participation rates, including comparison data with similar districts and statewide participation (MDE > Data Center > Secure Reports > Assessment Secure Reports). Refer to Chapter 11 for additional information.

ARC responses are provided to MDE annually, and information about timelines is provided through the *Assessment Update*. More information, including resources and user guides to complete the ARC response, is available on the [MTAS Participation](#) page (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > Minnesota Tests > MTAS Participation).

Learner Characteristics Inventory (LCI)

The National Alternate Assessment Center (NAAC) developed the LCI as a research tool to better understand the learning characteristics of students participating in alternate assessments based on extended standards. Using the LCI helps MDE ensure that the test is designed appropriately for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, and that the intended population is participating in the test. The Learner Characteristics Inventory (LCI) must be completed and entered online by district staff before a student's MTAS scores can be entered. The LCI form is available on the [User Guides](#) page of the PearsonAccess Next website (PearsonAccess Next > Resources & Training > User Guides).

Career and College Readiness

This section outlines career and college readiness requirements. Minnesota expects its high school graduates to demonstrate the skills and knowledge necessary for success beyond high school. Based on Minnesota Statutes, sections 120B.30 and 120B.125, districts have a number of requirements to fulfill for student career and college planning; however, students are not required to achieve a specific score on an assessment in order to graduate or meet graduation assessment requirements.

Overview

Districts must assist students with career and college readiness by:

- Offering students in grades 11 and 12 an opportunity to participate in a nationally recognized college entrance exam on a school day.
- Monitoring students' development and growth in career and college readiness.
- Assisting students no later than grade 9 in exploring and planning activities for career interests or postsecondary education.

MDE does not track graduation requirements. Districts must ensure they are assisting students with each of the areas outlined in the bullets above, and it is up to the district to determine how these areas are met.

Students who will turn 21 while enrolled in high school and who do not meet or exceed the Minnesota Academic Standards, as measured by the MCA, are to be informed that admission to a public school is free and available to any resident under 21 years of age until at least one of the following occurs: 1) the first Sept. 1 after the student's 21st birthday; 2) the student's completion of academic and course credits for graduation requirements; 3) the student's withdrawal with no subsequent enrollment within 21 calendar days; or 4) the end of the school year. Districts determine how this notification will be provided.

Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.30 requires a school or district to record student progress toward career and college readiness on the high school transcripts of students.

- The statute states a student is career and college ready if the student is able to successfully complete credit-bearing coursework at a two- or four-year college or university or other credit-bearing postsecondary program without need for intervention.
- Schools, districts, and charter schools are best positioned to make individual determinations about a student's progress toward career and college readiness. The statute does not prescribe a specific tool or method for measuring progress toward career and college readiness.

Offer Opportunity for College Entrance Exam

Districts must provide students the opportunity to participate in a nationally recognized college entrance exam (the ACT or SAT) on a school day, but individual students are not required to take part. MDE strongly encourages districts to administer the version of the exam with the writing component (ACT with Writing), if available, to provide students the most comprehensive information. While a district may offer other assessment options to students at their discretion (for example, ASVAB or ACCUPLACER), a college entrance exam must still be offered.

Even though only some students are eligible for reimbursement based on Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.30, subdivision 1e (details below), all grade 11 and 12 students must still be offered the opportunity to participate.

Districts annually determine which assessment(s) will be offered and enter into a contract with the service provider(s), ACT and/or College Board. Districts work directly with the service provider(s) to determine administration mode, test materials needed, and test dates, and for any administration policies and procedures questions.

The following provides additional clarification about student participation.

- The district determines which assessment to offer or may choose to offer both (ACT and/or SAT).
- The district must offer students a college entrance exam each year on a school day, even if the district already offers one of the assessments on a national test date.
- The college entrance exam must be offered in both grade 11 and grade 12; eligible students will decide if they will participate and in which grade they will do so. It must be offered in both grades as a student may choose not to participate in grade 11, for example, but may choose to participate in grade 12.
- Each district will determine how the assessment opportunity will be communicated to students and families (for example, letters to students/families or notification on the district/school website).
- Students can choose to take the college entrance exam on a national test date, and the district can request reimbursements for eligible students who do so.
- The opportunity to participate should be available to all students. However, students with significant cognitive disabilities may be the exception due to the possibility that a college entrance exam may not be the most appropriate measure of their career and college readiness. IEP teams for those students may consider discussing the best measures of each student's knowledge, skills, mindset, and experiences in the academic, workplace, and personal/social domains to successfully navigate toward and adapt to economically viable careers.
- Districts may allow other students to participate in their school day administration if they choose (for example, students who have already been reimbursed or home-schooled students who are not eligible for reimbursement). As long as the district is offering the opportunity to grade 11 and grade 12 students in a school day administration, other students may participate at the district's discretion.

Districts are expected to contract and pay for the administration of the college entrance exam and can request reimbursement from MDE.

- MDE reimburses districts for students who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals (FRP). To be eligible, the student must have been identified in student enrollment data as eligible for FRP at some point during the school year the exam is administered. **INFO!** The reimbursement criteria has not changed with the passing of the [Free School Meals for Kids Program](#) (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > School-Community Connections > Food and Nutrition > School Nutrition Programs > Free School Meals for Kids Program).

- MDE may reimburse districts on a prorated basis for students who are not eligible for FRP but are still unable to pay for the exam, as the legislation does not provide for a specific reimbursement to districts for students unable to pay.
 - A district may not charge a fee to a student who is unable to pay for the college entrance exam.
 - No criterion was provided to determine ability to pay, so districts must determine who is in the unable-to-pay category.
 - MDE does not know if funds will be available for students unable to pay until reimbursements for students qualifying for FRP are made.
- While a school district may require a student who is not eligible for FRP to pay the cost of taking a nationally recognized college entrance exam, these charges may create barriers to student participation. MDE encourages that, whenever possible, fees should be avoided.
- MDE will reimburse only one college entrance exam per eligible student. Districts can use the Student Assessment History Report under [Assessment Secure Reports](#) to determine if reimbursement has been previously provided for a student (MDE > Data Center > Secure Reports > Assessment Secure Reports).
- Note: ACT provides an opportunity for students who are eligible for FRP to apply for a fee waiver. FRP students taking the ACT for the first time typically would not need to complete the fee waiver because their district may receive reimbursement for the cost of their assessment.
 - The fee waiver process would be most appropriate for a student who is taking the ACT for the second time because MDE reimburses districts for only one assessment per student.
 - If district or school staff are assisting students with fee waiver requests, ensure that laws regarding private student data and FRP status are followed.

Once results are received from the service provider, districts use the [Graduation Requirements Records \(GRR\)](#) MDE system to request reimbursement (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Business and Finance > Data Submissions). Student results must first be received to ensure that the students whose districts are requesting reimbursement actually completed testing; MDE will request student results during a reimbursement audit.

- When requesting reimbursements in GRR, districts will use FRP eligibility information (the FRP flag in enrollment data) to make the requests. However, district staff requesting reimbursements do not need detailed information or forms related to a student's FRP information.
- As available funding is based on legislation, districts should enter all requests for reimbursement in the year the assessment was taken.
- Districts are reimbursed only for students who tested when enrolled in grade 11 or 12. Students who test in an earlier grade will not be reimbursed for past tests (for example, a student who tested in grade 10 will not be reimbursed for that test the following year when they are in grade 11). These students would be eligible for reimbursement if they tested again in grade 11 or 12, however.
- In order to be eligible for reimbursement for the current fiscal year, students must have tested prior to July 1.
- The deadline for entering reimbursement requests is annually in September; detailed information is provided in the *Assessment Update*.

- Nonpublic schools cannot request reimbursement but are able to use nonpublic pupil textbook aid to pay for this testing.
- Districts can decide to allow home-schooled, shared-time, or nonpublic school students to participate on the district testing day; however, they **cannot** request reimbursement for these students.

Monitor Student Development in Career and College Readiness

Districts must monitor student development and growth in career and college readiness. They must also regularly identify needed curricular and instructional adjustments as well as individual student’s academic strengths and needs for targeted interventions or remediation.

To support districts in this monitoring, student career and college readiness (CCR) scores for grades 10 and 11 are provided for reading and mathematics on Individual Student Reports (ISRs) and District and School Student Results (DSR and SSR) files. Goal scores have been established for student CCR scores to compare whether students are on track to pass a college entrance exam by the end of grade 11.

Assist Students in Exploration and Planning Activities

Districts must also assist students no later than grade 9 in exploring and planning activities for career interests or postsecondary education.

This plan must be reviewed and revised annually at a minimum by the student, the student’s parent/guardian, and the school or district. The plan also requires providing an interest inventory to the student. MDE does not endorse a particular product for the career interest survey; the district itself must determine how to best meet the requirement.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the largest nationally representative assessment of what our nation’s students know and are able to do in various subjects for grades 4, 8, and 12. The purpose of the NAEP is to provide a fair and accurate measure of student achievement over time and across the nation. Through *The Nation’s Report Card*, the NAEP provides results on subject-matter achievement, instructional experiences, and school environment for all students and student demographic groups. The results are used by policymakers, media, and state education departments to compare and understand student achievement within the nation and states.

The NAEP currently administers assessments in six subjects: civics, mathematics, reading, science, U.S. history, and writing. The NAEP uses subject-specific frameworks to measure student achievement in these subjects. The NAEP frameworks are designed to provide a rich and rigorous set of standards that define what students should know and be able to do in a particular subject and are independent from any state standards. The NAEP frameworks and assessment questions are developed and reviewed by subject matter experts, practitioners, and members of the general public—including researchers, educators, business leaders, policymakers, and parents/guardians. The NAEP assessments include selected response questions, constructed-response questions, hands-on tasks, and scenario-based tasks.

Schools and students are randomly selected to participate in the NAEP. Federal law specifies that the NAEP is voluntary for every student, school, or school district. However, ESSA federal law requires all states and public school districts that receive Title I funds to participate in the NAEP mathematics and reading assessments in grades 4 and 8, if selected. While participation is required as per the assurances for accepting Title I funds, no sanctions or awards are given for performance on the NAEP.

The NAEP is designed to cause minimal disruption of classroom activities. Including transition time, directions, and the completion of a survey questionnaire, it takes approximately 120 minutes for students to complete the digitally-based assessments. Each student will be assessed in one subject only. Districts, schools, and teachers do not need to prepare their students to take the assessment but should encourage them to do their best. Within a school, only a portion of the student population participates, and the student responses are combined with those from other participating students to produce the results. Student responses on the NAEP are confidential, and the privacy of each participating school and student is essential. The NAEP is not designed to report results for individual students, classrooms, or schools.

The NAEP 2024 administration will help NAEP continue to examine transitions to online assessments and using devices that students are most familiar with. Such shifts will help to ensure the program can flexibly, meaningfully, and reliably measure trends in student achievement and experiences over time. As usual, the NAEP representatives will provide significant support to participating schools. They will administer the assessment and bring all necessary materials and equipment, including the devices, to assess the students. For NAEP 2024, the NAEP representatives will ask to use school-based internet—when possible—to conduct the assessment.

NAEP Schedule of Assessments

The NAEP schedule of assessments specifies the NAEP operational program for each year. The schedule is tentative and includes the subjects and grades to be assessed and the level of results to be released (State or National). The schedule for the next few years is listed in Table 4. In addition, pilot assessments, studies, and special administrations may occur as well.

The NAEP 2024 administration will include two main assessment programs—state and national. The assessment window is January 29 to March 8, 2024.

The state program includes assessments in mathematics and reading at grades 4 and 8. In addition to the assessments, the National Indian Education Study (NIES) will be conducted at grades 4 and 8. NIES describes the condition of education for American Indian and Alaska Native students in the United States, and results will be released at the state and national levels.

The national program includes operational assessments in science at grade 8 and mathematics and reading at grade 12. Additionally, the High School Transcript Study (HSTS) will be conducted at grade 12. HSTS examines course-taking patterns of students and relates those patterns to educational achievement and NAEP assessment data. Results from the operational assessments will be released at the national level. In addition to the operational assessments, the national program also includes pilot assessments in mathematics and reading at grades 4 and 8. Results from the pilot assessments will not be publicly released but will be used to inform future NAEP assessments.

Table 4. NAEP Schedule of Operational Assessments

| Year | National Results | State Results |
|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| 2023–24 | Reading (grades 4, 8, 12) Mathematics (grades 4, 8, 12) Science (grade 8) | Reading (grades 4, 8) Mathematics (grades 4, 8) |
| 2024–25 | Long-Term Trend (LTT) (ages 9, 13, 17) | |
| 2025–26 | Reading (grades 4, 8) Mathematics (grades 4, 8) Civics (grade 8) U.S. History (grade 8) | Reading (grades 4, 8) Mathematics (grades 4, 8) |

NAEP Resources

- The [National Assessment of Educational Progress \(NAEP\)](#) page of the MDE website (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)) provides more information about and resources for understanding the NAEP assessments in Minnesota.
- The Minnesota Snapshot Reports posted on the [Nation’s Report Card](#) page of the MDE website (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) > Nation’s Report Card) provide the NAEP results for Minnesota.
- Refer to the [NAEP](#) website (nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard) for further information.
 - [NAEP Assessment Frameworks](#) (NAEP > About > Assessment Frameworks) are blueprints that guide the development of the assessments and determine the subject-specific content and skills to be assessed.
 - The [NAEP Questions Tool](#) (NAEP > Resources & Data Tools > NAEP Questions Tool) contains released items from the NAEP assessments with student responses, item statistics, and scoring guides.
- Refer to [The Nation’s Report Card](#) (nationsreportcard.gov) for NAEP results.

Local Testing Time Limitations

Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.301 places local testing-time limitations on districts. For students in grades 1–6, the cumulative total amount of time spent taking locally adopted districtwide or schoolwide assessments must not exceed 10 hours per school year. For students in grades 7–12, the cumulative total amount of time spent taking locally adopted districtwide or schoolwide assessments must not exceed 11 hours per school year. Schools and districts determine what constitutes a districtwide or schoolwide assessment. The following assessments or types of assessments are not included in the limitations:

- Statewide assessments like the MCA, MTAS, ACCESS, and WIDA Alternate ACCESS
- International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement exams

- Nationally recognized college entrance exams
- Career interest inventories
- NAEP
- Identification for services, such as special education or English learner programs

INFO! The screening requirements of the [Minnesota Reading to Ensure Academic Development \(READ\) Act](#) are also not included in the limitations (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > READ Act).

Districts should use published estimated testing times to determine the time for each test; it is not necessary to track actual times by student. The Achieve organization provides a free Student Assessment Inventory on the [Student Assessment Inventory for School Districts](#) page of their website (achieve.org > Our Initiatives > Assessments > Student Assessment Inventory > About Student Assessment Inventory) that districts can use to evaluate the assessments students are taking. If a district or school plans to exceed the maximum number of testing hours, it should be specified in their World’s Best Work Force (WBWF) Plan. The explanation or justification for these assessments should be developed in consultation with the exclusive representative of the district’s or school’s teachers. Contact MDE.WorldsBestWorkForce@state.mn.us for additional information about WBWF.

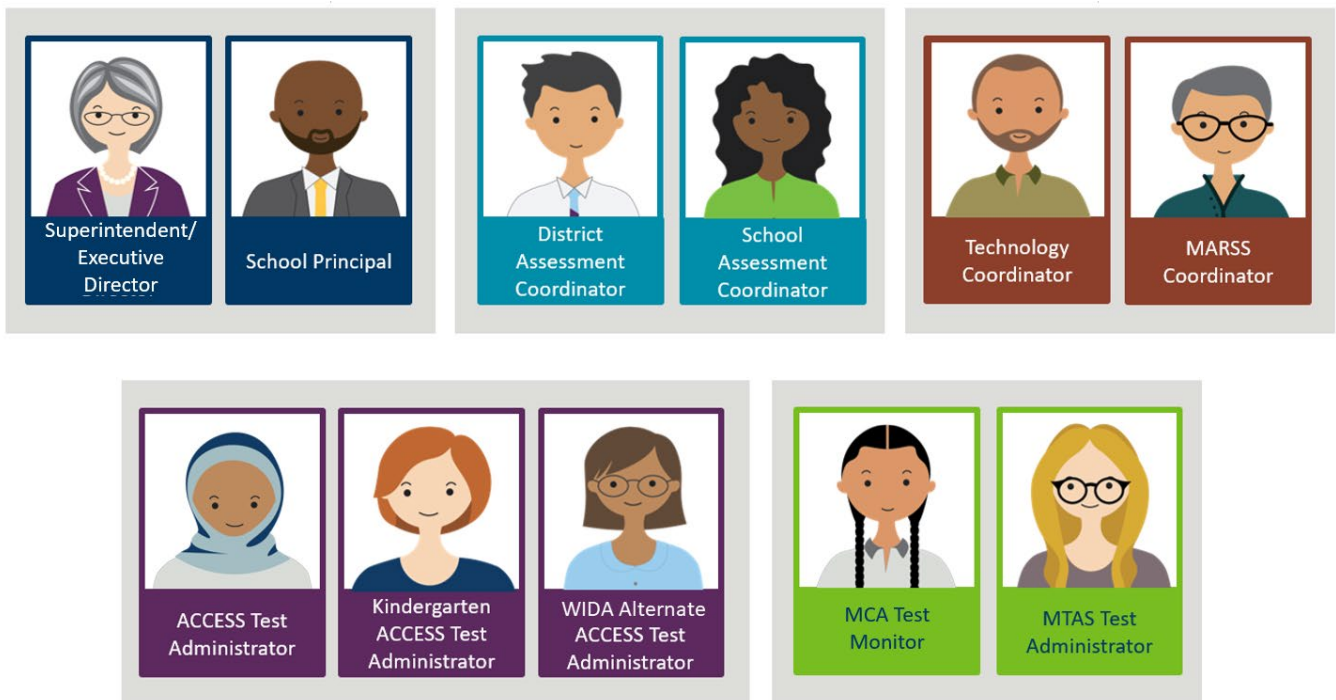
Chapter 3 — Roles and Responsibilities for Testing

Overview

This chapter defines roles and responsibilities to ensure state and district policies and procedures are followed and test security is maintained throughout test administration. Depending on the number of staff in the district or charter school, staff may be assigned to more than one of the roles with the corresponding responsibilities identified below. Throughout this chapter, the term “district” is used to denote both districts and charter schools.

References to the applicable chapter/appendix for detailed information about the tasks listed below are included in parentheses. Any new responsibilities or applicable changes for this year are included in this chapter; however, since these changes are discussed in detail in other chapters, the “new” and “clarification” symbols are not used to call them out. (Symbols are only used if this chapter contains the only mention of a change.)

Figure 3: Staff Who Have Roles for Testing



Superintendent's/Executive Director's Roles and Responsibilities for Testing

The Superintendent or Executive Director is responsible for providing the resources a district needs to administer assessments.

Superintendent's/Executive Director's Responsibilities Before Testing

1. Designate or confirm a District Assessment Coordinator (DAC) and a District Technology Coordinator (or an Assessment Technology Coordinator, if a separate role) who will complete the responsibilities listed in the following sections. This should be done no later than early fall in order for these individuals to receive the necessary training to fulfill these roles.
2. Ensure the Site Verification Coordinator (SVC) has designated these contacts in the District and School Site Verification system and verifies their contact information annually.
3. Designate alternate contacts to fulfill the responsibilities for testing in case of absence, as needed. Alternate District Assessment Coordinators may be designated in MDE-ORG, or contacts may be designated only in the district. If no alternate is designated and the DAC is absent, then all responsibilities default to the Superintendent/Executive Director.
4. Ensure you (or a designated person) are identified in MDE-ORG as the Identified Official with Authority (IOWA). The IOWA provides staff access to MDE secure systems for statewide testing: Test WES, Assessment Secure Reports, and the Graduation Requirements Records (GRR) system.
5. In conjunction with the DAC, ensure that a district test security procedure is in place and kept up to date and that information or training on district policies and procedures has been provided to staff.
6. Complete the *Test Security Training* each school year to confirm your understanding of, and intention to implement, policies and procedures applicable to your role to ensure test security and test score integrity.
7. Confirm that the DAC has reviewed applicable MDE training resources and/or attended MDE trainings specific to the administration of the statewide assessments each school year.
8. To reinforce a culture of academic integrity, communicate the importance of test security and the expectation that staff will keep test content secure and act with honesty and integrity during test administration.
9. Designate staff who will confirm that all eligible students have unique state student identification (SSID)/MARSS numbers, and make corrections as needed in the Student Identity Validation Interface.
10. Designate a MARSS Coordinator who will submit student enrollment data to MDE on an ongoing basis throughout test administrations, as needed, to ensure accurate enrollment and test eligibility information.
11. Confirm that the DAC will have time to complete Pretest Editing in Test WES.
12. Fully cooperate with MDE representatives conducting site visits or audits, as applicable, during testing.

Superintendent’s/Executive Director’s Responsibilities After Testing

1. Verify with the DAC that all test security issues have been reported to MDE and are being followed up on as needed.
2. Verify with the DAC that any missing secure test materials have been reported to the service provider or MDE and are addressed as needed.
3. Confirm that the DAC will have time to complete Posttest Editing in Test WES.
4. Confirm that the MARSS Coordinator has updated all student enrollment records and that the DAC has finalized the district’s assessment records prior to the close of Posttest Editing, so that accurate information is used for final assessment reports and accountability.
5. Confirm that the DAC or another designated staff person has access to the GRR system and has time to request and confirm reimbursements for eligible students for college entrance exams.
6. Discuss the final assessment results with the DAC as well as district and school administrators.
7. Prepare for questions from local media and constituents about final test and accountability results.

District and School Assessment Coordinator’s Roles and Responsibilities for Testing

The District Assessment Coordinator (DAC) is the district’s main contact with MDE, the service providers, and the School Assessment Coordinators for statewide testing.



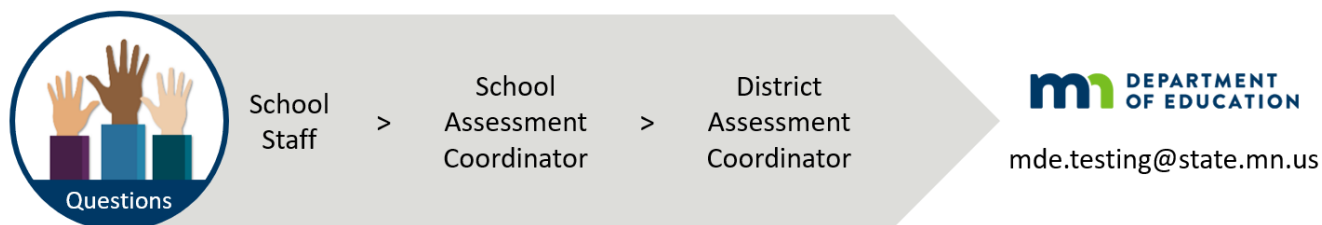
The DAC is ultimately responsible for ensuring the district’s security procedures are communicated and being followed, all required trainings are completed, and all secure materials are accounted for.

The District and School Assessment Coordinator roles and responsibilities are combined because the responsibilities may vary from district to district, and some districts do not assign School Assessment Coordinators. This ensures that all responsibilities are reflected under one role.

- If your district has staff assigned as School Assessment Coordinators, responsibilities may be delegated as applicable within the district.
- If School Assessment Coordinators are not assigned, ensure there is a designated contact at each school for questions, if applicable (for example, some smaller districts or charter schools may have only one contact).
- In addition, for ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, some districts may have an EL coordinator or other EL staff coordinate aspects of test administration. In these cases, it is important for the DAC to communicate the applicable responsibilities to those staff.

The DAC should be the person who calls or emails MDE with policy and procedure questions related to test administration and then distributes the information within the district as needed. In general, the DAC should not

direct other district and school staff to contact MDE with questions. This ensures that the DAC 1) knows testing policies and procedures and can serve as the source of information across the district and 2) is aware of all test administration issues within the district. However, if your district experiences any technical issues related to online testing, remind Technology Coordinators and Test Administrators/Test Monitors (following your district policies) to contact the applicable service provider(s) to report the issue and receive further instructions as soon as possible. While MDE should be contacted for questions related to testing policies and procedures, the service providers provide the immediate assistance needed for technical issues.



District and School Assessment Coordinator’s Responsibilities Before Testing

1. Establish and implement district test administration and test security policies and procedures (Chapter 5).
 - Confirm there is an up-to-date written district test security procedure on file. If a district test security procedure does not exist, write such a procedure in collaboration with other administrators prior to test administration.
 - Annually review test administration and test security policies detailed in this *Procedures Manual* (Appendix B), the *Test Security Training*, and other applicable resources and guides; incorporate these policies into the district policies and procedures as needed.
 - Determine if information on district policies and procedures will be provided to staff through trainings or through written resources, and subsequently, provide the trainings and/or written resources.
 - Provide the district test security procedure to MDE, if requested.
2. Establish the district testing calendar within the testing windows specified in the *Important Dates* at the beginning of the manual.
 - Determine the district testing calendar for ACCESS, WIDA Alternate ACCESS, MCA, and MTAS (Chapter 6).
 - Publish the district testing calendar no later than Oct. 1; ensure testing dates (by grade and subject) for each school in the district are updated as needed (Chapter 6).
 - Schedule rooms, computer labs, and devices, as needed, for testing (Chapter 7).
 - Arrange for Test Monitor(s) and Test Administrator(s) to administer the test(s), and assign students to them (Chapter 7).
3. Complete and verify training(s) completed by all staff involved with testing (Chapter 7).
 - Identify DAC trainings and resources to review and attend MDE trainings.

- Complete the *Test Security Training* to confirm your understanding of, and intention to implement, policies and procedures applicable to your role to ensure test security and test score integrity.
 - Provide training to School Assessment Coordinators on district policies and procedures and assign other training resources, as needed. As a School Assessment Coordinator, complete or attend any other trainings required by the district and/or review information on district policies and procedures for testing.
 - Collaboratively develop and implement a plan ensuring all staff involved with testing complete the required trainings.
 - Verify that all staff involved with testing complete the *Test Security Training*.
 - Verify that all Test Administrators who will administer ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS have completed the applicable online WIDA training courses and quizzes in addition to MDE required trainings.
 - Verify that all Test Monitors who will administer the MCA, and Test Administrators who will administer the MTAS, have completed the applicable MDE required trainings.
 - Verify that staff have completed any other trainings required by the district.
 - Verify that all staff have received applicable training or information on district policies and procedures for testing.
 - Determine how training completion is tracked by role for all staff, and keep records of completed trainings for two years after the end of the academic school year in which testing took place.
4. Identify appropriate tests for students, and ensure student data sent to service providers for testing are correct.
- Collaboratively determine with the MARSS Coordinator that all student data are current and submitted to MDE as needed.
 - In conjunction with the MARSS Coordinator and Special Education and English learner staff, ensure students receiving special education services and English learners are correctly identified in enrollment data.
 - Identify and manually add any students not included in the precode files who will be testing (for example, home-schooled students) using Precode Student Eligibility in Test WES (Chapter 6).
 - Identify students who may change grades between the start of the school year and the start of testing, and ensure that each student takes the correct assessment (Chapter 9).
 - Determine which college entrance exam will be offered for students in grades 11 and 12, and establish a contract with the applicable service provider (Chapter 2).
 - Work with the Special Education and English learner staff to determine which English learners, according to participation guidelines (Chapter 4), will take the WIDA Alternate ACCESS.
 - Work with the English learner and Special Education staff to determine which English learners require accommodations for the ACCESS, Kindergarten ACCESS, or WIDA Alternate ACCESS as specified in their IEPs or 504 plans.

- Indicate the number of ACCESS Online testers in grades 1–12, order ACCESS test materials (Kindergarten ACCESS and paper test materials for grades 1–12), and order WIDA Alternate ACCESS test materials in the WIDA Assessment Management System (WIDA AMS) (Chapter 7).
 - Collaboratively determine and document—with Special Education and English learner staff—any universal supports and/or accommodations needed by individual students for MCA (Chapter 4).
 - Work with the Special Education staff to determine which students, according to the eligibility requirements (Chapter 4), will take the MTAS.
 - Complete Pretest Editing in Test WES for MCA and MTAS to change test assignments and indicate universal support and accommodation codes as needed (Chapter 7).
 - Complete District Options and District Confirmations in Test WES during Pretest Editing to indicate MCA/MTAS shipping preferences and confirm information for all assessments (Chapter 7).
 - Communicate information to applicable school staff to ensure that students take the correct assessment (ACCESS or WIDA Alternate ACCESS; MCA or MTAS) and/or receive the universal supports and/or accommodations required.
 - Develop process for documenting reasons why students may not be participating in testing (for example, parent/guardian refusals or medical excuse) and communicating information to applicable school staff.
5. Prepare testing conditions.
- Ensure that the applicable staff involved with administering ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS are set up with user accounts for the WIDA Secure Portal and WIDA AMS.
 - Ensure that the applicable staff involved with administering MCA and MTAS are set up as users with active accounts in PearsonAccess Next.
 - Create reporting groups if teachers in the district will access MCA and MTAS preliminary results in PearsonAccess Next (Chapter 11).
 - In collaboration with the Technology Coordinator, use technical resources on the service provider websites to ensure readiness for ACCESS and MCA online testing (Chapter 6).
 - Work with technology staff to prepare for online testing. This includes ensuring all hardware and software requirements are met and equipment is available (for example, headphones, headsets for ACCESS) (Chapter 7).
 - Plan seating or testing room arrangements for students to ensure independent work and ensure student to Test Administrator/Test Monitor ratios are followed (Chapter 7).
 - Determine which student resources will be used to prepare students for testing and ensure students are familiar with the format and functionality of the test they will be taking (Chapter 7).
 - Determine where students who finish testing in earlier sessions will go while other students finish testing (Chapter 8).
 - For ACCESS Online, ensure the following preparations are completed in WIDA AMS (Chapter 8):

- Verify students are showing as enrolled in the correct school and district when verifying test sessions. For the Writing domain, verify students are showing in the correct test session (either handwriting or keyboarding).
 - Print test session rosters and student testing tickets, and keep them secure until test administration.
 - For MCA, ensure universal support and accommodation codes are updated in Pretest Editing in Test WES throughout the testing window, as needed.
 - For MCA online testing, ensure the following preparations are completed in PearsonAccess Next (Chapter 8):
 - Verify students are showing as enrolled in the correct school and district, and are eligible for the correct test, when setting up test sessions.
 - Print test session rosters and student testing tickets, and keep them secure until test administration.
 - Review and prepare for administration of universal supports and/or accommodations, including scheduling for small group and individual administrations and preparing for translated directions and scribes (Chapter 4).
 - Establish a process for inventorying and distributing secure test materials to each school building if test materials are shipped to the district.
 - If test materials are shipped to the schools, notify School Assessment Coordinators or designated school contact when test materials will be arriving and the quantities to expect.
 - Determine staff who will enter student responses from MCA paper test materials and MTAS data online (Chapter 8).
6. Maintain security of test content and test materials.
- Receive secure paper test materials from the service providers, and immediately lock them in a previously identified secure area.
 - If schools are receiving test materials directly from the service providers, confirm that each school has received test materials and that they are locked in a secure area.
 - Inventory or confirm paper test materials have been inventoried using the security checklists, and contact the applicable service provider if there are any discrepancies (Chapter 5).
 - Organize secure test materials remaining at the district, ensuring that they are kept secure and not distributed unless needed for test administration.
 - Verify that each school has the needed paper test materials; order additional test materials as needed.
 - Organize secure test materials for online administrations, including student testing tickets and scratch paper, and keep them secure (Chapter 8).
 - For ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, if students are using Writing Response Booklets (dependent upon grade level) or paper test booklets, confirm that all students have the appropriate

test materials and that preprinted student information on the label is accurate. Arrange for student information to be filled in (hand bubbled) on test booklets that do not have individual student labels (Chapter 8).

- Distribute the applicable ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS *Test Administrator’s Scripts* and *Test Administration Manuals* to Test Administrators so they can become familiar with the script and prepare for test administration.
- Distribute the applicable MCA *Testing Directions* to Test Monitors so they can become familiar with the script and prepare for test administration.
- Define the chain of custody for providing secure test materials to Test Administrators/Test Monitors.
 - The chain of custody must address the process for providing test materials on the day of testing, distributing test materials to and collecting from students, keeping test materials secure between testing sessions, and returning test materials after testing is completed.
 - Record and assign all secure paper test materials on the *Test Materials Assigned to Students Checklist* or applicable district-provided checklist. Secure test materials should not be distributed prior to the day of testing (exceptions to this are specified in Chapter 5).
 - Distribute materials to Kindergarten ACCESS, WIDA Alternate ACCESS, and MTAS Test Administrators prior to testing to allow for administration preparation and adaptation of materials to meet individual student needs (Chapter 5).
- Provide MTAS Data Collection Forms if scores will be centrally entered by the district or school prior to the close of the testing window.

District and School Assessment Coordinator’s Responsibilities on Testing Days

1. Distribute materials to Test Administrators/Test Monitors on the day of testing, and ensure secure test materials, including student testing tickets and scratch paper, are kept secure between testing sessions according to district procedures.
2. Ensure that ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS *Test Administrator’s Scripts* and MCA *Testing Directions* are followed.
3. As the DAC, answer questions from School Assessment Coordinators or designated school contacts and Test Administrators/Test Monitors, as needed.
4. Conduct (or designate trained staff members to conduct) random, unannounced visits to testing rooms within the district to observe staff adherence to test security and test administration policies and procedures (Chapter 5).
5. Fully cooperate with MDE representatives conducting site visits or audits, as applicable (Chapter 5).
6. Collect information about and document testing irregularities using the *Test Administration Report (TAR)* (Chapter 5).
7. If security violations occur, contact MDE within one business day, and submit the violation through Assessment Security Records (ASR) in Test WES within two business days (Chapter 5).

8. Monitor testing progress to ensure all students complete testing during the testing window.
9. For ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, indicate appropriate test codes in WIDA AMS or indicate on test booklets as needed, and/or keep notes for entry during Posttest Editing (Chapter 9).
10. For MCA and MTAS, indicate applicable test codes in PearsonAccess Next as needed, and/or keep notes for indication during Posttest Editing (Chapter 9).

District and School Assessment Coordinator's Responsibilities After Testing

1. Ensure that designated staff have entered student responses from MCA paper test books and MTAS data online. All information must be entered before the testing windows close in order for the tests to be scored and reported (Chapter 8).
2. Ensure that secure paper test materials, student testing tickets, and scratch paper are kept in a locked, secure location after testing. Following district procedures, materials may be collected at the district or school level or kept secure between testing sessions by the Test Administrator/Test Monitor.
3. Use security checklists to verify receipt of all secure paper test materials from the assigned Test Administrator/Test Monitor after testing is completed. Collect copies of the security checklists from each school.
4. For all ACCESS Paper test materials, confirm that there are no additional markings or bubbled information on the test booklets that may affect how the test booklet is scanned and scored (Chapter 8).
5. Arrange for the secure disposal of all test materials that are not required to be returned, as outlined in the applicable resources and guides. The secure disposal must be completed no more than two business days after the close of the testing window (Chapter 10).
6. Prepare materials for pickup by the carrier on the designated date(s). Ensure that all boxes containing the secure testing materials are in a secure location known to appropriate school staff or are returned to the district office.
7. Follow procedures for returning scorable test materials for ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS by the deadline to ensure student tests are included for Posttest Editing and reporting.
8. Follow procedures for returning secure test materials for all assessments as outlined in the applicable resources.
9. Ensure that all materials returned are received by the service providers.
10. Complete a TAR for all administered assessments as needed and keep on file at the district for two years following test administration; completed TARs must be available if requested by MDE (Chapter 5).
11. Collect security documents (such as security checklists) from each school. Keep on file at the district for two years from the end of the academic school year in which testing took place (Chapter 5).
12. Review assessment records and resolve discrepancies in Test WES during Posttest Editing (Chapter 10), including verifying or indicating test, universal support, and accommodation codes. Work with the MARSS coordinator to resolve any issues in enrollment data submitted to MDE.
13. Request reimbursement for eligible students for college entrance exams as needed (Chapter 2).

14. Retrieve final assessment results from Secure Reports, and prepare for questions from the media/community partners (Chapter 11).
15. Work with principals to communicate information on what it means to abide by the embargo, and ensure the requirements for embargoed final assessment results are followed.
16. Distribute Individual Student Reports (ISRs) to parents/guardians no later than Dec. 1 (Chapter 11).

School Principal's Roles and Responsibilities for Testing

In conjunction with the DAC, the School Principal's role is to designate the School Assessment Coordinator, if applicable, and other school staff members who will serve as Test Monitors or Test Administrators.

School Principal's Responsibilities Before Testing

1. Designate a School Assessment Coordinator, if applicable, and a Technology Coordinator for the school. If a School Assessment Coordinator is not assigned, identify a school contact, unless you are fulfilling that role or the DAC is fulfilling that role (for example, some smaller districts or charter schools may have only one contact).
2. Be knowledgeable about proper test administration and test security as outlined in this *Procedures Manual* as well as other applicable resources and guides.
3. Complete the *Test Security Training* each school year to confirm your understanding of, and intention to implement, policies and procedures applicable to your role to ensure test security and test score integrity.
4. Complete or attend any district-required trainings and/or review information on district policies and procedures for testing.
5. Verify with the District or School Assessment Coordinator that all staff involved in testing, including Test Administrators and Test Monitors, complete the required trainings for administering the tests.
6. To reinforce a culture of academic integrity, communicate the importance of test security and the expectation that staff will keep test content secure and act with honesty and integrity during test administration.
7. Provide adequate secure storage space for all secure test materials before, during, and after testing until they are returned to the service provider or securely disposed of.
8. In conjunction with the Technology Coordinator, ensure that sufficient and adequate computers/devices, headphones/headsets, and/or mice and/or keyboards are available and that rooms are set up appropriately for online testing.
9. Ensure students have had a chance to become familiar with the format and functionality of the test they will be taking.

School Principal's Responsibilities on Testing Days

1. Ensure that all test administration policies and procedures and test security requirements in this *Procedures Manual* and other applicable resources and guides are followed.

2. Fully cooperate with MDE representatives conducting site visits or audits, as applicable.

School Principal's Responsibilities After Testing

1. In conjunction with the District or School Assessment Coordinator, ensure that all secure test materials are collected, returned, and/or securely disposed of as required.
2. Discuss the assessment results with the School Assessment Coordinator as well as district administrators and the DAC. In conjunction with the DAC, ensure the requirements for embargoed final assessment results are followed.
3. Prepare for questions about test results.

Technology Coordinator's Roles and Responsibilities for Testing

The District Technology Coordinator (or Assessment Technology Coordinator) is responsible for ensuring that the district is prepared for online test administration, and also for providing technical support to district staff.

1. Acquire user accounts for PearsonAccess Next, WIDA Secure Portal, and WIDA AMS from the DAC.
2. Complete the *Test Security Training* each school year to confirm your understanding of, and intention to implement, policies and procedures applicable to your role to ensure test security and test score integrity.
3. Complete or attend any district-required trainings and any service provider technology trainings, and review information on district policies and procedures for testing.
4. Review all technical documentation available on the service provider websites.
 - Prepare computers and devices for online testing following requirements outlined in the *Technology Readiness Checklist for WIDA Online Assessments*.
 - Prepare computers and devices for online testing following requirements outlined in the *Infrastructure Readiness Checklist* for MCA.
5. Fully cooperate with MDE representatives conducting site visits or audits, as applicable.
6. Provide technical support/troubleshooting during test administration and contact the service provider help desks, as needed.

ACCESS Test Administrator's and MCA Test Monitor's Roles and Responsibilities for Testing

Test Administrators and Test Monitors are responsible for maintaining test security during test administration, including actively monitoring test sessions and keeping test materials secure. The following information applies to grades 1–12 ACCESS Test Administrators except as noted below. Requirements for selecting Test Administrators and Test Monitors are available under *Selecting Test Administrators and Test Monitors* in Chapter 7.

ACCESS Test Administrator's/MCA Test Monitor's Responsibilities Before Testing

1. Complete or attend any required test-specific or district trainings each school year to confirm your understanding of, and intention to implement, policies and procedures applicable to your role to ensure test security and test score integrity.
 - For ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, complete the applicable online WIDA training courses and quizzes in the WIDA Secure Portal for the tests being administered, along with the required MDE trainings in the Learning Management System (LMS).
 - For MCA, complete the required MDE trainings in the LMS.
 - Ensure you have received information on and understand district- and school-specific policies and procedures for testing.
2. For ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, review the *Test Administrator's Scripts* for detailed information and scripted instructions. For MCA, review the *Testing Directions: Online* and/or *Testing Directions: Paper* for detailed information and scripted instructions for each test administration.
3. Know how to contact the District or School Assessment Coordinator during testing if any test-related issues or questions arise.
4. Know where to pick up secure test materials on the day of the test.
5. Know the school's plan for keeping test materials and test content secure between test sessions, such as when students are taking an assessment over multiple days or are taking a break on the same day.
6. Know the plan for what students will do if they finish testing within the testing session, and where students who finish testing in earlier sessions will go while other students finish their tests in subsequent sessions.
7. In conjunction with the District or School Assessment Coordinator, know which students are to be provided with appropriate universal supports and/or accommodations, and know any related specific test administration procedures.
8. Remove or cover any required materials in the testing room or on student desks. This step can be taken shortly before testing begins.

ACCESS Test Administrator's/MCA Test Monitor's Responsibilities on Testing Days — Before Students Arrive

1. Receive secure test materials from the District or School Assessment Coordinator and keep them secure until the test session.
2. Make sure there are enough computers/devices or paper test materials for the number of students taking the test.
3. For online testing, make sure you have the student testing tickets for the students in your test session. Ensure all allowable materials for students (for example, scratch paper, pens, or pencils) are ready to distribute to students as needed.

4. Check paper test materials to verify that all the test materials listed on the *Test Materials Assigned to Students Checklist* or applicable district-provided checklist are in the test materials you receive.
5. Use the *Test Materials Assigned to Students Checklist* or applicable district-provided checklist to assign numbered test booklets to individual students.
6. If directed to do so by the District or School Assessment Coordinator, fill in appropriate information on a student's Writing Response Booklet or paper test booklet for ACCESS using a number 2 pencil. Ensure that all hand-bubbled information matches student enrollment data.
7. Record additional test materials received on the *Test Materials Assigned to Students Checklist* or applicable district-provided checklist.

ACCESS Test Administrator's/MCA Test Monitor's Responsibilities on Testing Days — During the Test

1. Verify that students are logged in and taking the correct test (meaning, the name on the test matches their name and they are not logged in to another student's test).
2. For ACCESS, verify that the students testing with the paper test materials are using the correct grade-level and tier test booklet.
3. Follow the script in the *Test Administrator's Scripts (ACCESS)* and/or applicable *Testing Directions (MCA)* exactly.
4. Follow the district policies and procedures for restricting student access to cell phones and other devices during testing.
5. Stay in the room and actively monitor during the entire test session.
6. Know what to do and whom to contact if an emergency or unusual circumstance arises (for example, a student gets sick, the fire alarm goes off).
7. Know what to do and whom to contact if technology issues are encountered during an online test administration so that you can continue to actively monitor the students who are testing.
8. Do not review, discuss, capture, email, post, or share test content in any format.
9. Ensure all students have been provided the opportunity to independently demonstrate their knowledge.
10. Fully cooperate with MDE representatives conducting site visits or audits, as applicable.
11. Document students who require a scribe or translated directions or any unusual circumstances for test administration (for example, students requiring a cell phone as a medical monitor), and provide the information to the District or School Assessment Coordinator who will document the information on the *Test Administration Report (TAR)*.
12. Notify the District or School Assessment Coordinator of any possible security violations as soon as possible.

ACCESS Test Administrator’s/MCA Test Monitor’s Responsibilities on Testing Days — After the Test

1. Follow the guidance and scripted instructions in the *Test Administrator’s Scripts* (ACCESS) and/or applicable *Testing Directions* (MCA).
2. Collect all student testing tickets, scratch paper, and other materials provided during testing (for example, formula sheets), and keep them secure after each testing session. When testing is complete, return these materials to the District or School Assessment Coordinator or securely dispose of them, if instructed.
3. Use the *Test Materials Assigned to Students Checklist* or applicable district-provided checklist to verify receipt of all test books from assigned students before they leave the testing room.
4. For all ACCESS Paper test materials, confirm that there are no additional markings or bubbled information on the test booklets that may affect how the test booklet is scanned and scored.
5. Enter student responses from MCA paper test books online, or return test materials to the District or School Assessment Coordinator if the district enters data centrally.
6. Keep paper test materials secure after the test session, and return them to the District or School Assessment Coordinator or to a secure location, as directed.
7. Immediately notify the District or School Assessment Coordinator if any test materials are missing.

Kindergarten ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS/MTAS Test Administrator’s Roles and Responsibilities for Testing

Kindergarten ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS/MTAS Test Administrator’s Responsibilities Before Testing

1. Complete or attend any required test-specific or district trainings each school year to confirm your understanding of, and intention to implement, policies and procedures applicable to your role to ensure test security and test score integrity.
 - For Kindergarten ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, complete the applicable online WIDA training courses and quizzes in the WIDA Secure Portal for the tests being administered, along with required MDE trainings in the Learning Management System (LMS).
 - For MTAS, complete the applicable required trainings in the LMS based on the number of years you have administered the MTAS.
 - Ensure you have received information on district policies and procedures for testing.
2. Review the Kindergarten ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS *Test Administrator Manual* or MTAS Task Administration Manual for policies and procedures related to test administration.
3. Know when and where to pick up secure test materials.
4. Know the school’s plan for keeping test materials secure when not preparing for test administration or administering the test.

5. Become familiar with the test materials, including special instructions for certain tasks (for example, not reading aloud the question or answer options).
6. For WIDA Alternate ACCESS and MTAS, prepare test materials for administration.
 - Plan for instructional supports, objects, and manipulatives; any materials gathered for testing may remain in the classroom for daily use.
 - Plan specific adaptations for each student, as needed, to meet individual student needs. Reproduction of secure test materials is allowed only for adapting student-facing materials to a student's individual needs (such as enlarging materials or incorporating texture). Secure test materials may not otherwise be reproduced.

Kindergarten ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS/MTAS Test Administrator's Responsibilities on Testing Days — Before Students Arrive

1. Keep materials secure until the test session.
2. Ensure the appropriate test materials are available and ready for the student who is being administered the test.
3. If directed by the District or School Assessment Coordinator to do so, fill in the appropriate information on a student's Writing Response Booklet or paper test booklet for ACCESS Paper, Kindergarten ACCESS, and WIDA Alternate ACCESS using a number 2 pencil. Ensure that all hand-bubbled information matches student MARSS data.

Kindergarten ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS/MTAS Test Administrator's Responsibilities on Testing Days — During the Test

1. Administer each task to the student and record the score.
2. Know how to contact the District or School Assessment Coordinator during testing if any test-related issues or questions arise.
3. Know what to do if an emergency or unusual circumstance arises (such as if a student gets sick, the fire alarm goes off, etc.).
4. Fully cooperate with MDE representatives conducting site visits or audits, as applicable.
5. Document any unusual circumstance and report it to the District or School Assessment Coordinator.

Kindergarten ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS/MTAS Test Administrator's Responsibilities on Testing Days — After the Test

1. Keep materials secure after administering the test.
2. Return all secure test materials, including materials that were adapted for WIDA Alternate ACCESS and MTAS (such as enlarged materials or those with texture incorporated), to the District or School Assessment Coordinator, and report if any materials are missing.

3. For MTAS, if directed by District or School Assessment Coordinator, securely dispose of Response Option Cards (no more than two business days after the close of the testing window).
4. For WIDA Alternate ACCESS and MTAS, return instructional supports, objects, and manipulatives to the classroom unless directed to return them to the District or School Assessment Coordinator.
5. For Kindergarten ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, confirm that there are no additional markings or bubbled information on the Student Response booklets that may affect how they are scanned and scored. Return Student Response booklets to the District or School Assessment Coordinator to send back for scoring.
6. For MTAS, enter Learner Characteristic Inventory (LCI) data and MTAS scores online, or return Data Collection Forms and LCI data to the District or School Assessment Coordinator if entered centrally.

MARSS Coordinator's Roles and Responsibilities for Testing

MARSS Coordinator's Responsibilities Before Testing

1. Confirm that all eligible students have unique state student IDs (SSIDs) or MARSS numbers so that students are included in assessment precode files, and, if authorized, make corrections as needed in the Student Identity Validation Interface.
2. Ensure EL and Special Education designations are up to date and correct for students.
3. Submit student information to MDE on an ongoing basis so the student information is correct and available for the assessment precode files prior to and throughout test administrations.

MARSS Coordinator's Responsibilities After Testing

1. Ensure accurate enrollment of students during the testing windows.
2. Ensure State Aid Categories and other MARSS identifying characteristics are correct, especially for shared-time students, foreign exchange students, and any other students who are not expected to test.
3. Work with the District or School Assessment Coordinators to resolve discrepancies during Posttest Editing in Test WES, which may require multiple submissions to MDE before the close of the Posttest Editing window.

Chapter 4 — Universal Supports and Accommodations for Statewide Assessments

Overview

All public school students participate in statewide assessments, and it is important to clarify the role of universal supports and accommodations when considering *how* students will participate in the English language proficiency accountability assessments (ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS) and the standards-based accountability assessments (MCA and MTAS). Supports and accommodations do not change the construct intended to be measured by the assessment or the integrity of test results.

NEW! A version of this chapter has been created specifically for district staff: [Guidance for Universal Supports and Accommodations for Minnesota Statewide Assessments](#) (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > District Resources). DACs should ensure that staff who have a role in decision-making and/or test administration with universal supports and accommodations have this resource.

If the educators or teams (EL team, IEP team, and/or 504 plan team) making decisions about supports or accommodations have questions that are not specifically addressed in this chapter, email mde.testing@state.mn.us.

The Academic Standards, Instruction and Assessment division works closely with the Student Access and Opportunity and the Special Education divisions to review these questions and requests about supports and accommodations.

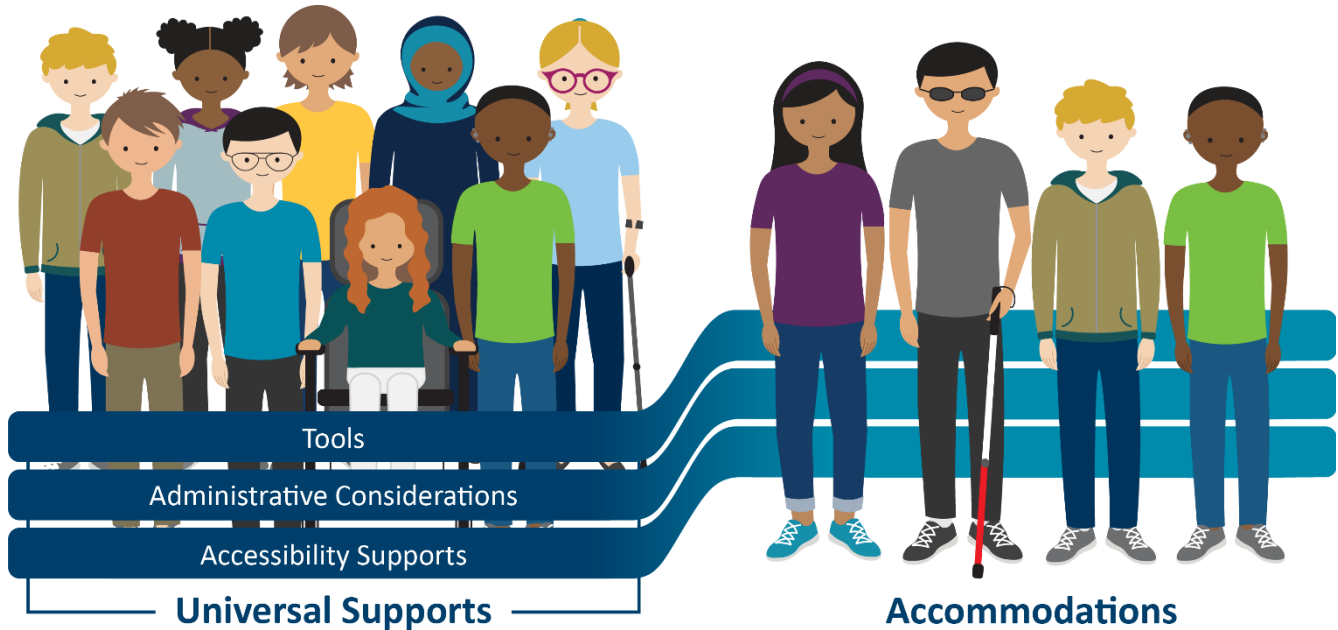
Universal Supports and Accommodations Overview

NEW! MDE has reorganized how supports and accommodations are presented for statewide assessments. This new framework has been applied throughout this chapter and replaces the former categorization (general supports, linguistic supports, and accommodations), but changes are not called out as new in every instance. While there are now only two main categories, additional subcategories have been used to better organize and describe available supports. Linguistic supports have been recategorized as universal supports to reduce the complexity in determining appropriate supports for all learners. It also recognizes a more inclusive population of multilingual learners (MLs), as some universal supports may be appropriate for English learners, former English learners and/or students who have participated in dual language education programs.

Note: Some universal supports available for statewide assessments may be considered or referred to as accommodations in other district- or school-wide assessments, so the guidance provided here is specific to statewide assessments.

The graphic below illustrates the types of supports available for statewide assessments; it also provides a general reference for the number of students who will likely use a given support. For example, more students will use universal supports than accommodations, since all students may be provided universal supports, while accommodations are only available and appropriate for a specific group of students.

Figure 4: Types of Supports Available for Minnesota Statewide Assessments



A brief overview of the categories is provided here; they are described in more detail in subsequent sections. Applicable teams should consider information from each of the categories when making decisions about how students will participate in statewide assessments.

- **Universal supports** are general supports available for all students that tailor the testing experience based on student needs or preferences specific to the testing environment or online features that are allowable within standardized testing. The use of a universal support may replace the need for an accommodation, depending on the student’s needs; universal supports may also be provided along with accommodations. Note: While universal supports are available to all students, some require a specific code to be applied in order for students to access them; these codes are noted when required. Universal supports may be provided by the school or embedded within the test, and are divided into the following categories:
 - Tools include classroom materials that students use in instructional or other assessment settings and features available in online tests.
 - Administrative considerations include changes to or personalization of test administration procedures or practices.
 - Accessibility supports include features that may be appropriate for a specific student or groups of students (such as multilingual learners) based on needs identified by an educator (or team of educators) familiar with the student’s characteristics and needs.
- **Accommodations** are changes in the way that a test is administered, and are meant to ensure equal access to the assessment. Accommodations are only available to students with an IEP or who qualify for a 504 plan. All needed accommodations should be documented annually in the IEP or 504 plan prior to testing.

Universal supports and accommodations provided during statewide assessments should be familiar to a student through use in classroom instruction, classroom assessments, and district assessments. In general, a

new support or accommodation should not be first introduced to a student at test administration time because it may negatively affect their performance on the test. The decision to provide a universal support or accommodation for the first time during testing should be made carefully by a team that is very familiar with the student’s needs; however, in this case, practice with the support or accommodation is encouraged whenever possible. Student resources are available to familiarize students with the test they will be taking, including universal supports and accommodations. These resources may also be utilized by educators for decision making. Refer to *Student Resources for Testing* in Chapter 7 or the [Student Resources](#) page of the MDE website for specific information for each statewide assessment (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > Student Resources).

Some supports and accommodations that are used during instruction may not be appropriate for use on certain statewide assessments. Educators should consult policies in this manual before determining which, if any, will be provided on statewide assessments. Supports and accommodations must be selected and implemented in ways that maintain the integrity of the assessment so that valid inferences can be made about what students know and can do.

MDE convenes a committee of educators—the Assessment Accommodations Review Panel (AARP)—to evaluate proposed additions to the universal supports and accommodations discussed in this manual. This review ensures that a student does not use a particular practice that could undermine the integrity of the resulting test score. They also consider whether additional individual practices proposed for use on statewide assessments should be included. Refer to the Statewide Testing Assessment Advisory Groups Overview section of the [District, Schools and Educators Statewide Testing](#) page of the MDE website for more information about this committee (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing (under Opportunities for Participation)).

Roles and Responsibilities for Making Support and Accommodation Decisions

Multiple staff members may be involved in the process of selecting, documenting, administering, and evaluating the use of universal supports and accommodations within a district. Educators and staff (including classroom teachers, multilingual and Special Education teachers, coordinators, directors, District and School Assessment Coordinators, or other staff) and even students and families may all play a role in the decision-making process or be part of the applicable teams (EL team, IEP team, and/or 504 plan team). Ultimately, the decision to provide supports or accommodations for testing should be a collaborative one focused on the strengths and needs of each individual student.

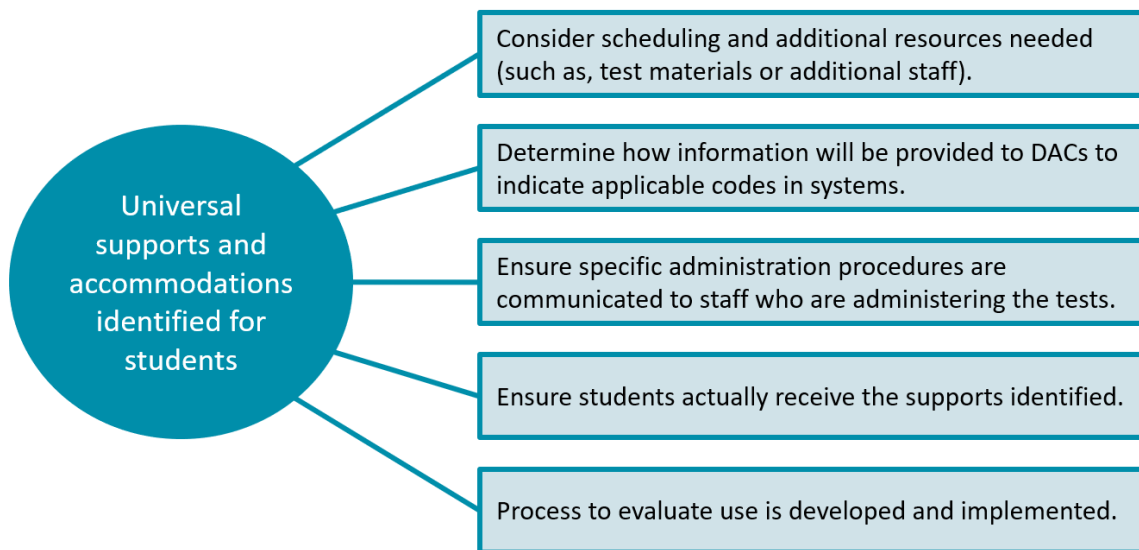
If supports or accommodations are used, they should also be evaluated for their effectiveness following test administration. Information from Test Monitors/Test Administrators needs to be gathered on the implementation of universal supports and accommodations during assessment. Observations conducted during test administration, interviews with Test Monitors/Test Administrators, and talking with students after testing sessions will likely yield data that can be used to guide the ongoing evaluation process at the district, school, and student levels. Additional information about decision-makers, and their roles, is included in the applicable sections below for universal supports and accommodations.

In order to prepare for test administration, District Assessment Coordinators (DACs) and School Assessment Coordinators, as applicable, need to develop policies and procedures for how information will be

communicated within the school and district to ensure that students receive appropriate universal supports and/or accommodations.

- The use of universal supports or accommodations may affect how administration is scheduled and what additional resources (for example, specific test materials or additional staff) are needed.
- For some universal supports and accommodations, information must be provided to DACs by the applicable teams or staff so codes can be indicated prior to testing in the WIDA Assessment Management System (WIDA AMS) for ACCESS or in Test WES during Pretest Editing for MCA.
- Specific test administration procedures must be communicated to staff who are administering the tests, and any additional resources or test materials must be provided.
- Processes must be in place to ensure students receive the correct universal supports and/or accommodations at the time of testing.
- Processes to evaluate the use of supports and accommodations should be developed to determine their effectiveness. This information may inform decisions about the continued use of a given support or accommodation or identify areas where Test Administrators/Test Monitors need additional training or support.

Figure 5: Considerations for Providing Universal Supports and Accommodations



Timeline for Decision-Making

The decision on which universal supports and/or accommodations will be used must be made before the student begins their assessment. Districts may set timelines for these decisions to be made so that test materials can be ordered in a timely manner and arrangements can be made for test administration. Decisions made after these timelines should still be honored, however, as long as they are made prior to testing.

Statewide Assessment Participation for Students with an IEP or 504 Plan

The current reauthorization of both the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that students with disabilities participate in the statewide

assessments that are designed to hold schools accountable for the academic performance of all students. In order to uphold these federal laws and their goals of inclusion of all students in academic and English language development standards, instruction, and assessments, there are no participation exemptions from statewide assessments based on disability, regardless of the nature or severity of the disability. IEP teams or 504 plan teams determine the appropriate manner for students with disabilities to participate in statewide assessments.

In the past, students with disabilities and English learners were often excluded from statewide assessments. Participation in statewide assessments is important as it allows schools and districts to ensure all students have access to a high-quality education. By requiring that all students take statewide assessments, schools and teachers have more information to see how all students are doing. This helps schools to continuously improve the education they provide and to identify groups, grades, or subjects that may need additional support.



Students with disabilities may participate in statewide assessments in several ways:

- **With or without accommodations.** IEP and 504 plan teams determine which accommodations, if any, are appropriate for students with disabilities. Accommodations are documented in the IEP or 504 plan and must be provided based on individual need, as long as they do not invalidate the assessment. It is recommended that teams also document any universal supports that students will use, particularly if they are locally provided, such as a magnification device, audio amplification, plastic color overlay, etc. This ensures that the student has access to the support during the assessment.
- **By taking an alternate assessment for which they are eligible.** Only students with IEPs are eligible for alternate assessments. The IEP team documents the decision to administer an alternate assessment in the student’s IEP.
 - English language proficiency accountability assessments: For English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities, the IEP team, in conjunction with EL staff and using the [WIDA Alternate ACCESS Participation Decision Tree](#) (WIDA > Assess > WIDA Alternate ACCESS), determine if the WIDA Alternate ACCESS is the most appropriate English language proficiency accountability assessment to use in place of the ACCESS.
 - Standards-based accountability assessments: For students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who meet the eligibility requirements, the IEP team may determine that MTAS is the most appropriate measure of academic skills in one or more subjects in place of MCA. Access the [Eligibility Requirements for the Minnesota Test of Academic Skills \(MTAS\)](#) on the [Minnesota Tests](#) page of the MDE website (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > Minnesota Tests).

English learners with disabilities should participate in as many domains of the ACCESS or the WIDA Alternate ACCESS as possible.

- If the student’s disability is such that they cannot participate in any domains of the ACCESS with accommodations, the IEP team and EL staff should consider the WIDA Alternate ACCESS.
- If it is impossible for a student to participate in a domain due to the student’s disability (for example, the listening domain for a student who is deaf), indicate Special Education Deferred (SPD) for that domain. Refer to *Test Codes* in Chapter 9 for more information. **INFO!** If the EL staff and the IEP team determine that the SPD code is appropriate for more than two domains, contact MDE at mde.testing@state.mn.us for approval. Note: SPD cannot be used to exempt a student from taking a test.



You must contact MDE before applying the SPD test code to more than two domains.

- **INFO!** The Kindergarten ACCESS integrates test content across multiple tasks and language domains; therefore, districts should contact MDE for guidance when a kindergarten student is determined to be unable to participate in any portion of the test due to the student’s disability.

In the rare instance a student is unable to take the MCA due to lack of access to a testing instrument, email mde.testing@state.mn.us for guidance.

- A student is considered able to access a test if they can view the test materials online or on paper, or can hear the test material through audio using a script in combination with a braille or large print test.
- Lack of access to a testing instrument does not apply in the following situations:
 - Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities (since they can participate in the MTAS)
 - Students who are currently using an accommodation such as braille in daily instruction (regardless of proficiency in use)
 - Students where the Medical Excuse (ME) test code would apply

Statewide Assessments and Multilingual Learners

For the English language proficiency accountability assessments, participation is required for students who are designated as English learners in enrollment data submitted to MDE. All students enrolled in applicable grades, including students designated as English learners, are required to participate in the standards-based accountability assessments.

As mentioned in the overview of this chapter, linguistic supports have been recategorized as universal supports on the MCA. This change recognizes a more inclusive population of multilingual learners, as some universal supports may be appropriate for English learners, former English learners, and/or students who have participated in dual language education programs.

When determining how multilingual learners will participate in statewide assessments, districts are encouraged to develop individual learning plans that document the universal supports to be provided during testing. Districts are also encouraged to involve parents/guardians in these decisions related to their student's learning plan; interpreters may be needed to allow full participation of the families. A collaborative dialogue between multilingual teachers, general education teachers, and families can help determine what is best for the individual student based on the instruction the student is receiving at the classroom level.

Individuals designated to determine appropriate universal supports for multilingual learners may include:

- The student's bilingual or EL teacher
- The EL program coordinator
- The student's other classroom teacher(s)
- The student's Special Education case manager, when applicable, and any related service provider
- District or School Assessment Coordinator
- The student's parent(s) or guardian(s), when appropriate
- The student, when appropriate
- If the student has a disability, the IEP or 504 plan team should be involved in the selection of both universal supports and accommodations. It is important that the IEP or 504 team include professionals with training, and preferably expertise, in second language acquisition.

When making decisions about appropriate universal supports for a multilingual learner, the district should consider the following information:

- Current English language proficiency level in each language domain (reading, writing, listening, and speaking)
- Literacy and oracy in the student's home language(s)
- Opportunity to learn the content areas assessed
- The primary language of instruction in the content areas
- Experience and length of time in U.S. schools
- Degree of familiarity with using the support(s) in instruction and assessment
- Grade level
- Other school- or district-level related data
- Whether a student would benefit from multiple supports

Supports and Accommodations for English Language Proficiency Accountability Assessments

Universal Supports for English Language Proficiency Accountability Assessments

For ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, the primary source of information about available universal supports is the *Accessibility and Accommodations Manual* provided by WIDA on the [Accessibility and Accommodations](#) page of the WIDA website (WIDA > Assess > Accessibility and Accommodations). While Minnesota uses the term “universal supports,” that manual uses “administrative considerations” and “universal tools” to differentiate supports available to all English learners on the ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS. Minnesota follows all of the WIDA guidelines for available supports.

The following sections provide state-specific guidance for the ACCESS and the WIDA Alternate ACCESS, as well as guidance for any additional universal supports MDE allows districts to provide. These supports are divided into the following categories:

- Tools include classroom materials that students use in instructional or other assessment settings.
- Administrative considerations include changes to or personalization of test administration procedures or practices.
- Accessibility supports include features that may be appropriate for specific students based on needs identified by an educator (or team of educators) familiar with the student’s characteristics and needs.

Use the information in both this manual and the WIDA manual to determine appropriate supports for students.

Tools—Provided by School

Tools provided by the school include classroom materials that students use in instructional or other assessment settings and other materials that are allowed to be used during testing.

CLASSROOM MATERIALS

Code: N/A

Allowed for: ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS

Description: Classroom materials include materials provided by the school or the student that are typically used in instruction, such as highlighters, specific writing utensils, pencil grips, or place markers. These materials may be used as needed with paper test materials or related paper test materials for online assessments. Refer to the *Test Coordinator Manual* and the *Test Administrator Manual* in the [WIDA Secure Portal](#) for information on materials allowed during ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS administrations. For any materials not listed in this section or the WIDA resources, contact mde.testing@state.mn.us to determine if they may be provided.

When to select: These materials may provide assistance to a student who normally uses these types of supports in daily instruction.

Notes for administration: A student may use classroom materials, such as highlighters, pencil grips, or place markers as needed with paper test materials or related paper test materials for online assessments.

Allowable writing utensils vary by test and/or administration mode:

- For ACCESS paper test materials (ACCESS Paper accommodations and ACCESS Online Writing grades 1–5), a student must use only a Number 2 pencil in order for the test to be scanned and scored. Similarly, Test Administrators must use only a Number 2 pencil in order for the Kindergarten ACCESS or WIDA Alternate ACCESS to be scanned and scored.
- For ACCESS Online Listening, Reading, and grades 6–12 Writing domains, a student may use either pencils or pens with scratch paper. Note: Using scratch paper is not allowed for the Speaking domain.

MUSIC OR NOISE BUFFERS

Code: N/A

Allowed for: ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS

Description: Music or noise buffers may include individual study carrels, headsets, earplugs, and individual portable buffers set on the student’s desk, or an audio player that generates white noise or instrumental music. The noise buffer or instrumental music can be accessed through headphones or in an individual setting.

When to select: Music or noise buffers may help reduce noise distractions for the student taking the test. Music and noise buffers provided by the school may be used, but only by students who have used them in instructional or other assessment settings. Noise buffers or instrumental music are provided at an individual level, not to an entire group on the assumption that all will benefit.

Notes for administration: Any noise or music that can be heard by others requires the student to test in an individual setting. Individuals must be able to control the on/off function and volume. Audio players must be school-owned, and the audio must be provided by the school.

SCRATCH PAPER

Code: N/A

Allowed for: Reading, Listening, and Writing domains of ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS

Description: Schools may provide or allow students to provide scratch paper for paper and online assessments. Specific materials may be used as scratch paper, including blank paper, individual whiteboards, commercially-produced graph paper, or student testing tickets. Refer to *Materials Allowed during Testing* in Chapter 7 for more information on allowable scratch paper and maintaining security of scratch paper.

When to select: This support is widely supportive for all students, especially for the Writing test.

Notes for administration:

- The Test Administrator cannot prompt a student to use scratch paper in any specific manner once testing has begun. The student may use scratch paper at their discretion, including folding it in sections themselves, but any direction or strategy for using scratch paper to answer questions must be handled prior to testing.
- The student must write their name on scratch paper, and Test Administrators must treat scratch paper as secure test materials. Requiring students to write their names on their scratch paper allows the Test

Administrator to ensure that they have accounted for scratch paper from all students. It must be collected at the end of each testing session and securely disposed of following testing (no more than 2 business days after the close of the testing window).

- For ACCESS, use of scratch paper is not allowed for the Speaking domain.

SENSORY TOOLS

Code: N/A

Allowed for: ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS

Description: Sensory tools include materials such as fidgets or weighted pads that a student uses, or has access to, during testing.

When to select: This support may provide assistance to a student who uses sensory tools to calm or alert their sensory system in their daily instruction or other assessment settings.

Notes for administration: The use of sensory tools must not be a disruption to other students. Any sensory tools that can be heard by others or could be considered distracting requires the student to test in an individual setting. No test content or writing may be present on the tools.

Administrative Considerations—Provided by School

FLEXIBLE/EXTENDED TESTING TIME

Code: N/A

Allowed for: ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS (all domains, but see notes for administration)

Description: Flexible or extended testing time means that a student requires additional time to complete an assessment that should be considered when scheduling testing.

- For grades 1–12 ACCESS, only extended time within a day is considered a universal support—extended time across multiple days is considered an accommodation. Refer to *Accommodations for English Language Proficiency Accountability Assessments* later in this chapter for more information.
- For Kindergarten ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, extended testing time is allowed within a day and across multiple days.

Breaks may also be provided.

Refer to the [Accessibility and Accommodations Manual](#) for additional guidance (WIDA > Assess > Accessibility and Accommodations).

When to select: This support may be most helpful for a student who needs extra time to process written text, to write, or to use other accommodations or equipment. Extended time should be planned for if this is a support or practice typically provided during instruction or other assessments.

Notes for administration: For Kindergarten ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, extended testing time is part of the administrative procedures based on the individual and unique administrations of these assessments.

For grades 1–12 ACCESS, extended testing time within a day is allowed but the district must have plans in place for the student to finish it within the same day. Refer to *Scheduling Grades 1–12 ACCESS Administrations* in Chapter 7 for additional information.

For guidance about breaks, refer to *Breaks and Leaving During Testing* in Chapter 8.

REPEATED, REPHRASED, OR TRANSLATED VERSION OF TEST ADMINISTRATOR’S SCRIPT

Code: N/A

Allowed for: Grades 1–12 ACCESS

Description: For ACCESS, the Test Administrator may repeat scripted directions from the *Test Administrator’s Scripts*. These directions may not be written out for the student; however, Test Administrators may rephrase, explain in English, or, if specifically requested, translate the directions into the student’s native language to help a student understand what to do.

Note: Translated directions are not allowed for Kindergarten ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS as the directions are embedded within the test and Test Administrators may never use a language other than English while administering the test.

When to select: This support may benefit students who typically need directions provided verbally or in written form more than one time to engage in assessments. Scripted directions may be repeated as needed. For translated directions, Test Monitors should consider what is needed by a student to help them understand what to do.

Notes for administration: This support only applies to instructions and not to test items, including practice items embedded in the test, or test content.

This universal support may be provided in a small group, if appropriate for all the students.

WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS

Code: N/A

Allowed for: ACCESS

Description: Test Administrators may write information specific to the administration of the test on the board or in the room. Examples of allowable information include information about scheduling (for example, “We will stop after answering 25 questions.”, “We will stop testing at the end of the class period.”) and what students may do when they are done with testing (for example, “Read a book when you are done testing.”).

When to select: Test Monitors should consider what is needed by a student; providing too much written information may be distracting or overwhelming.

Notes for administration: These guidelines about providing written information are specific to Minnesota.

Accessibility Supports—Provided by School

AUGMENTATIVE/ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION (AAC DEVICES)

Code: N/A

Allowed for: ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS

Description: Student uses an augmentative/alternative communication device to produce speech. These devices are considered the student’s voice, including for the Speaking test.

Refer to the [Accessibility and Accommodations Manual](#) for additional guidance (WIDA > Assess > Accessibility and Accommodations).

When to select: This support may be provided to a student who normally uses these devices in instruction.

Notes for administration: Any device that can be heard by others requires the student to test in an individual setting. Test Administrators may assist with navigation on the AAC device, such as navigating to a page, as long as the student is the one who chooses the answer from the AAC and this practice is consistent with how the student typically communicates in daily instruction.

COLOR OVERLAY

Code: N/A

Allowed for: ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS

Description: A transparent colored sheet that is placed over a page of text or is affixed to a device screen.

Refer to the [Accessibility and Accommodations Manual](#) for additional guidance (WIDA > Assess > Accessibility and Accommodations).

When to select: This support may provide assistance to a student who normally uses this support to reduce visual stress when reading.

Notes for administration: None.

LOW-VISION AIDS

Code: N/A

Allowed for: ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS

Description: A device or tool designed to improve the visual performance of a person with low vision. Examples of low-vision aids are magnifying glasses, electronic magnifiers, cardboard cut-outs, and a larger monitor screen size and different resolution for online assessments.

Refer to the [Accessibility and Accommodations Manual](#) for additional guidance (WIDA > Assess > Accessibility and Accommodations).

When to select: A student accustomed to viewing enlarged text or graphics or navigation buttons may need low-vision aids to view content on paper or online assessments. This support also may meet the needs of a student with visual impairments and other print disabilities. The use of this support should be considered along

with other supports, such as accessibility features embedded in the online test (for example, magnifiers) or an accommodation (such as large print paper test books).

Notes for administration: The use of this accessibility support may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment.

STYLUSES FOR DEVICES

Code: N/A

Allowed for: Online ACCESS

Description: A stylus may be used by the student to navigate through the online assessment, use tools, and indicate responses.

When to select: A stylus may provide assistance to a student with fine motor needs or print disabilities who normally uses it in daily instruction.

Notes for administration: None.

TEMPLATES TO REDUCE VISUAL PRINT FIELD

Code: N/A

Allowed for: ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS

Description: A material (such as a cardboard cutout) that blocks out part of the screen or test book.

Refer to the [Accessibility and Accommodations Manual](#) for additional guidance as well as information about the line guide tool in the Online ACCESS (WIDA > Assess > Accessibility and Accommodations).

When to select: This support may help a student focus on one part of a question or test content at a time by blocking out part of the screen or test book. These materials may provide assistance to a student who normally uses them in daily instruction.

Notes for administration: None.

VOICE FEEDBACK DEVICES

Code: N/A

Allowed for: ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS

Description: Voice feedback devices and whisper phones allow a student to vocalize as they read and work problems. This support also includes a student reading the test out loud in an individual setting.

When to select: This support may benefit a student who normally vocalizes what they read in daily instruction.

Notes for administration: A student may not read the test aloud directly to the Test Administrator, and the Test Administrator cannot provide verbal or nonverbal prompts. This support must be provided in an individual setting.

Accommodations for English Language Proficiency Accountability Assessments

Minnesota follows all guidelines and accommodations recommended by WIDA in the *Accessibility and Accommodations Manual* on the [Accessibility and Accommodations](#) page of the WIDA website (WIDA > Assess > Accessibility and Accommodations). Districts need to reference this resource for information on all available accommodations for ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS. Contact mde.testing@state.mn.us with any questions related to references in WIDA resources to state-specific information.

The following provides information on state-specific accommodations:

- Extended testing time across multiple days is considered an accommodation for grades 1–12 ACCESS. A student who has an IEP or 504 plan indicating that a domain can be completed across multiple days may have one or more domains scheduled over multiple days, as required for this accommodation. Note: Extended time over multiple days is a very rare accommodation that must be reviewed and approved by MDE. District Assessment Coordinators must email mde.testing@state.mn.us to request approval. The request must include 1) the student’s MARSS/SSID number, 2) the student’s grade and school, 3) the student’s primary disability, 4) a student-specific rationale as to why extended time within a single day would not be sufficient, and 5) confirmation that the accommodation is indicated in the student’s IEP or 504 plan. Do not include any other personally identifying information in the request.
 - While requiring one-on-one administration or assistive technology may be one of the factors for requesting extending time across multiple days, the support itself does not necessarily warrant an approval for this accommodation.
 - Additionally, in most cases an extended time across multiple days accommodation request submitted to accommodate the Test Administrator’s schedule, or to guard against the off chance that the student will not be able to complete a domain in one sitting or within the day, will not be approved.
- Paper administrations of the entire grades 1–12 ACCESS test are available as an accommodation for English learners with an IEP or 504 plan. Before ordering a paper test for a student, please consider the following:
 - Other than the specific requirements for how the Writing domain is administered (grades 1–3 are entirely on paper, grades 4–5 are presented online and handwritten on paper, and grades 6–12 are entirely online), it is not possible to combine administration modes. A student cannot take some domains on paper and some online.
 - A student should be included in the decision-making process before selecting a paper administration.
 - Note: Paper administrations are also available for English learners who have been enrolled in school in one of the 50 states of the United States or in the District of Columbia for less than a year (first enrolled within 12 months from the first day of the ACCESS testing window). The decision to administer the ACCESS Paper should be based on an individual consideration of the student’s familiarity with the technology used in the online testing platform. **NEW!** This guidance has been updated to better address student proficiency with technology instead of language proficiency. Note: Some new EL students may be identified as recently arrived English learners (RAELs) for

accountability purposes. The RAEL accountability indicator does not affect the determination of which English learners are eligible to use paper test materials for ACCESS.

For ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, accommodation codes are indicated in WIDA AMS or on a paper test booklet during the testing window. After testing, districts are able to indicate, remove, or change accommodation codes in Test WES during Posttest Editing.

Supports and Accommodations for Standards-Based Accountability Assessments

The following graphic provides a visual reference of the universal supports and accommodations available for MCA. It is also posted as a standalone document on the [District Resources](#) page of the MDE website (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > District Resources). The following sections provide the detailed descriptions and guidance for selection and administration, and information for MTAS is included where applicable.

2023–24 MCA Supports and Accommodations

Universal Supports

General supports available for all students but some supports may be appropriate only for specific students or groups of students.



Accommodations

Only available for students with an IEP or 504 plan.



| | Tools | Administrative Considerations | Accessibility Supports | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Provided by School | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classroom materials (such as highlighters or place markers) Music or noise buffers Scratch paper Sensory tools | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Different time of day Environment (such as lights and seating) Flexible testing time Individual or small group setting Repeated or written version of <i>Testing Directions</i> * Simplify <i>Testing Directions</i> #* | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amplification devices Calculator (handheld), mathematics manipulatives, or an abacus for science and grade 11 mathematics Color overlays Low-vision aids Signed interpretation of <i>Testing Directions</i> # Stylus for devices Templates to reduce the visual print field Translate <i>Testing Directions</i> in languages other than English not provided by MDE (written or oral) #* Voice feedback devices Word-to-word translations using dictionaries or programs for mathematics and science #* | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow student to read a reading test aloud, recording their voice for later playback # Assistive technology # Calculator (handheld), mathematics manipulatives, or an abacus for grades 3–8 mathematics # Scribe # |
| Provided by MDE | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mathematics tables for grade 11 mathematics Translated <i>Testing Directions</i> in Hmong, Spanish, or Somali #* Word-to-word translations using word lists for mathematics and science #* | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mathematics tables for grades 3–8 mathematics # Paper test book (regular print, large print, and braille) # Script for mathematics and science (including signed interpretation of the script) # |
| Embedded in Test | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Answer eliminator Calculator Formula sheet Highlighter Ruler Scratch pad Straightedge White noise | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Answer masking Color contrast Line reader mask Magnifier Pop-up translations in Hmong, Somali, and Spanish for mathematics and science #* Standard text-to-speech for mathematics and science * Zoom feature | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accommodated text-to-speech for mathematics and science # |

* Suggested for multilingual learners

Requires a code to be indicated to MDE by the District Assessment Coordinator

If there is the need for an accommodation or support not specifically addressed in this table, email mde.testing@state.mn.us.

Universal Supports for Standards-Based Accountability Assessments

Universal supports are general supports available for all students that tailor the testing experience based on student needs or preferences specific to the testing environment or online features that are allowable within standardized testing. The use of a universal support may replace the need for an accommodation, depending on the student's needs; universal supports may also be provided along with accommodations. These supports may be provided by the school, provided by MDE, or embedded in to the online test delivery platform, and are divided into the following categories:

- Tools include classroom materials that students use in instructional or other assessment settings and features available in online tests.
- Administrative considerations include changes to or personalization of test administration procedures or practices.
- Accessibility supports include features that may be appropriate for specific students or groups of students (such as multilingual learners) based on needs identified by an educator (or team of educators) familiar with the student's characteristics and needs.

Some universal supports require the District Assessment Coordinator to enter a code in Pretest Editing in Test WES in order for the support to be available for the student; these codes are listed in the sections below, if required. In addition, if a student has an IEP or 504 plan, universal supports are often indicated to ensure they are provided during testing. However, regardless of whether a specific code must be documented for MDE, school staff and District and School Assessment Coordinators need to ensure there is a process in place to communicate about and provide needed universal supports to students during testing.

Many universal supports and accommodations can be used together, but others cannot. Make sure supports and accommodations are compatible and that the applicable codes are indicated correctly. Detailed information about conflicting codes for Pretest Editing is provided in the [Test WES Pretest Editing User Guide](#) in Test WES (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Data Submissions > Test WES).

Use the information in the following sections to determine appropriate supports for students. Note: Some universal supports available for statewide assessments may be considered accommodations in other district- or school-wide assessments, so the guidance provided here is specific to statewide assessments.

Table 5. 2023–24 Summary of Universal Supports on MCAs

| Universal Supports | Code | Reading MCA | Math MCA | Science MCA | Suggested for Multilingual Learners | Individual Setting May Be Required | Test Administration Report Required |
|----------------------------------------------------------|------|-------------|------------------|-------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Tools—Provided by School | | | | | | | |
| Classroom materials | N/A | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Music or noise buffers | N/A | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Scratch paper | N/A | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Sensory tools | N/A | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Tools—Embedded in Test | | | | | | | |
| Answer eliminator online tool | N/A | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Calculator online tool | N/A | | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Formula sheet online tool | N/A | | ✓ | | | | |
| Highlighter online tool | N/A | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Ruler online tool | N/A | | | ✓ | | | |
| Scratch pad online tool | N/A | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Straightedge online tool | N/A | | ✓ (Gr. 8 and 11) | | | | |
| White noise tool | N/A | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Administrative Considerations—Provided by School | | | | | | | |
| Different time of day | N/A | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Environment | N/A | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Flexible testing time | N/A | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Individual or small-group setting | N/A | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Repeated or written version of <i>Testing Directions</i> | N/A | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Simplify <i>Testing Directions</i> | TD | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Accessibility Supports—Provided by School | | | | | | | |
| Amplification devices | N/A | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |

| Universal Supports | Code | Reading MCA | Math MCA | Science MCA | Suggested for Multilingual Learners | Individual Setting May Be Required | Test Administration Report Required |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-------------|---------------|-------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Calculator (handheld), mathematics manipulatives, or abacus for Science MCA, and grade 11 Mathematics MCA | N/A | | ✓ (Gr. 11) | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Color overlay | N/A | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Low-vision aids | N/A | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Signed interpretation of testing directions | OA | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| Stylus for devices | N/A | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Templates to reduce visual print field | N/A | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Translated <i>Testing Directions</i> | TD | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Voice feedback devices | N/A | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Word-to-word translations using dictionaries or programs for mathematics and science | OL | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Accessibility Supports— Provided by MDE | | | | | | | |
| Mathematics tables for grade 11 Mathematics MCA | N/A | | ✓ (Gr. 11) | | | | |
| Translated <i>Testing Directions</i> in Hmong, Spanish, or Somali | TD | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Word-to-word translations using word lists | OL | N/A | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Accessibility Supports— Embedded in Test | | | | | | | |
| Answer masking | N/A | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Color contrast | N/A | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Line reader mask | N/A | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Magnifier | N/A | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |

| Universal Supports | Code | Reading MCA | Math MCA | Science MCA | Suggested for Multilingual Learners | Individual Setting May Be Required | Test Administration Report Required |
|---------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------------|----------|-------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Pop-up translations in Hmong, Spanish, and Somali | HM SP SO | N/A | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Standard text-to-speech | N/A | N/A | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Zoom feature | N/A | X | ✓ | ✓ | | | |

MTAS Universal Supports

Districts are not required to document for MDE which universal supports are provided on the MTAS. Adapting to student needs is integral to MTAS, and the Test Administrator may provide needed supports (for example, objects, tactile graphics, and counters) as long as the support is not specifically prohibited in the task script. For information on allowable test administration activities, refer to the [MTAS Task Administration Manual](#) (PearsonAccess Next > Resources & Training > User Guides) or Chapter 5 of this *Procedures Manual*.

If the universal supports described below for MCA are also applicable for MTAS, MTAS is included in the “Allowed for” description. Specific guidance for universal supports for MTAS includes: calculator (handheld) use, signed interpretation of test, translated directions, mathematics tables, and word-to-word translations using dictionaries and programs. However, since adapting to student needs is integral to MTAS, there may be other supports to consider for MTAS that are not part of the MCA supports list below; contact mde.testing@state.mn.us with questions.

Tools—Provided by School

CLASSROOM MATERIALS

Code: N/A

Allowed for: MCA (Reading, Mathematics, Science); MTAS (Reading, Mathematics, Science)

Description: Classroom materials include materials provided by the school or the student that are typically used in instruction, such as highlighters, specific writing utensils, pencil grips, or place markers. These materials may be used as needed with paper test materials or related paper test materials for online assessments (such as scratch paper). Refer to *Tools—Embedded in Test* later in this chapter for information about tools embedded in the online MCA. The [Testing Directions](#) contain the specific lists of materials allowed during MCA test administrations (PearsonAccess Next > Preparing for Testing > Testing Directions). These directions are updated and posted annually before the testing windows open. For any materials not listed in this section or the *Testing Directions*, contact mde.testing@state.mn.us to determine if they may be provided.

When to select: These materials may provide assistance to a student who normally uses these types of supports in daily instruction.

Notes for administration: A student may use classroom materials, such as highlighters, pencil grips, or place markers, as needed. For MCA paper test materials, a student may use either pencils or pens to mark answers in the paper test book (since district staff will later enter the responses in TestNav).

MUSIC OR NOISE BUFFERS

Code: N/A

Allowed for: MCA (Reading, Mathematics, Science); MTAS (Reading, Mathematics, Science)

Description: Music or noise buffers may include individual study carrels, headsets, earplugs, and individual portable buffers set on the student’s desk, or an audio player that generates white noise or instrumental music. The noise buffer or instrumental music can be accessed through headphones or in an individual setting. Note: A white noise accessibility feature is available for the online MCA; refer to *Tools—Embedded in Test* for more information.

When to select: Music or noise buffers may help reduce noise distractions for the student taking the test. Music and noise buffers provided by the school may be used, but only by a student who has used them in instructional or other assessment settings. Noise buffers or instrumental music must be considered at an individual level, not provided to an entire group on the assumption that all will benefit.

Notes for administration: Any noise or music that can be heard by others requires the student to test in an individual setting. Individuals must be able to control the on/off function and volume. Audio players must be school-owned, and the audio must be provided by the school.

SCRATCH PAPER

Code: N/A

Allowed for: MCA (Reading, Mathematics, Science); MTAS (Reading, Mathematics, Science)

Description: Schools may provide or allow a student to provide scratch paper for paper and online assessments. Specific materials may be used as scratch paper, including blank paper, individual whiteboards, commercially-produced graph paper, or student testing tickets. Refer to *Materials Allowed during Testing* in Chapter 7 for more information on allowable scratch paper and maintaining security of scratch paper.

When to select: This support is widely supportive for all students.

Notes for administration:

- A student may draw lattices, diagrams (such as number lines), or charts on scratch paper if they choose, but examples cannot be displayed in the classroom or handed out during testing. A student may use scratch paper at their discretion, including folding it in sections themselves, but any direction or strategy for using scratch paper to answer questions must be handled prior to testing; the Test Administrator or Test Monitor cannot prompt a student to use it in any specific manner once testing has begun.
- For MCA paper test books, in addition to scratch paper provided separately to a student, a student may use blank spaces in the test book or the grid paper and formula sheets provided in the mathematics test books to work on items and make notes. If a student removes the grid paper or formula sheets from the

test book, they must write their name on the sheets so that the materials can be accounted for and provided on subsequent days of testing, as needed.

- The student must write their name on scratch paper, and Test Administrators and Test Monitors must treat scratch paper as secure test materials. Requiring students to write their names on their scratch paper allows the Test Administrator/Test Monitor to ensure that they have accounted for scratch paper from all students. It also allows for the scratch paper to be re-used on a subsequent day of testing, if the district chooses. It must be collected at the end of each testing session and securely disposed of following testing (no more than 2 business days after the close of the testing window).

SENSORY TOOLS

Code: N/A

Allowed for: MCA (Reading, Mathematics, Science); MTAS (Reading, Mathematics, Science)

Description: Sensory tools include materials such as fidgets or weighted pads that a student uses, or has access to, during testing.

When to select: This support may provide assistance to a student who uses sensory tools to calm or alert their sensory system in their daily instruction or other assessment settings.

Notes for administration: The use of sensory tools must not be a disruption to other students. Any sensory tools that can be heard by others or could be considered distracting requires the student to test in an individual setting. No test content or writing may be present on the tools.

Tools—Embedded in Test

ONLINE TOOLS (MCA)

Code: N/A

Allowed for: MCA (Reading, Mathematics, Science)

Description: Available online tools in TestNav include the following:

- Answer eliminator: Students can use the answer eliminator tool to cross out an answer choice for multiple-choice and multiple-response questions.
- Calculator: Students can use the calculator tool to help them answer questions. It is available only on mathematics and science questions where students are allowed to use it.
- Formula sheets: Students can access online, grade-level formula sheets in grades 5–8 and 11 Mathematics MCA.
- Highlighter: Students can use the highlighter tool to highlight words. They can choose the color they wish to use and can also listen to highlighted text.
- Ruler: Students can use the ruler tool on specific Science MCA questions to measure length.
- Scratch pad: Students can use the scratch pad tool to write or draw notes during the test. **NEW!** The scratch pad has replaced the notepad.

- **Straightedge:** Students can use the straightedge tool on specific questions in grades 8 and 11 Mathematics MCA to create a line of best fit.
- **White noise:** Students can use the white noise tool to listen to background noise as a way to reduce ambient sound and help them focus on the test. There are three white noise sounds to choose from: waves, white noise, and wind.

More information about available tools is available on the [Student Readiness Tools](#) page (PearsonAccess Next > Preparing for Testing > Student Readiness Tools). In addition, the educator resources contain important information on how tools and accessibility features in TestNav interact with each other.

Refer to *Accessibility Supports—Embedded in Test* in this chapter for additional information about features embedded in the online test.

When to select: These tools may provide support to all students. Students should be familiar with how to use tools prior to test administration.

Notes for administration: Students must be familiar with online tools prior to test administration. During test administration, Test Monitors must not remind students of any test-taking or academic strategies (such as using a certain online tool). Help of this sort should be provided prior to testing, such as when the Student Readiness Tools are used to prepare students for testing. The only times when Test Monitors may provide additional guidance are included in the *Testing Directions*. The *Answering Questions and Providing Assistance* section outlines what help may be given during testing. For example, Test Monitors may verbally describe the functionality of a tool if a student cannot move forward, but they must not demonstrate it.

Administrative Considerations—Provided by School

DIFFERENT TIME OF DAY

Code: N/A

Allowed for: MCA (Reading, Mathematics, Science); MTAS (Reading, Mathematics, Science)

Description: The time of day an assessment is administered is changed.

When to select: A student who needs to test at a different time of day than originally scheduled and/or than is planned for other students may do so for any reason. This may include adjusting test administration if a student does not have necessary aids (such as glasses, hearing aids) when they are to begin testing and/or has another extenuating circumstance occur (such as medication not taken, traumatic event).

Notes for administration: None.

ENVIRONMENT

Code: N/A

Allowed for: MCA (Reading, Mathematics, Science); MTAS (Reading, Mathematics, Science)

Description: The assessment is administered in a special setting (for example, certain lights, acoustics, seating arrangements).

When to select: A student who needs a sensory friendly environment to calm or alert their sensory system or to decrease distractions may benefit from this support. A student who requires a special setting or feature may have it provided for any reason as long as test security requirements are followed.

Notes for administration: Refer to *Preparing for Test Administration* in Chapter 7 for additional information and take these needs into account when planning test administration logistics.

FLEXIBLE TESTING TIME

Code: N/A

Allowed for: MCA (Reading, Mathematics, Science); MTAS (Reading, Mathematics, Science)

Description: Flexible testing time means that a student requires additional time to complete an assessment that should be considered when scheduling testing. Extended testing time is allowed within a day and across multiple days. Breaks may also be provided.

When to select: This support may be most helpful for a student who needs extra time to process written text, to write, or to use other accommodations (including braille tests, ASL interpretation, scribe, or script) or equipment. Extended time and/or more frequent breaks should be planned for if this is a support or practice typically provided during instruction or other assessments.

Notes for administration: Consideration for a student requiring extended testing time should be taken when scheduling testing sessions and planning for testing sessions (for example, planning locations for students to continue testing if they need more time, planning fewer items or more testing sessions for some students).

For guidance about breaks, refer to *Breaks and Leaving During Testing* in Chapter 8.

INDIVIDUAL OR SMALL-GROUP SETTING

Code: N/A

Allowed for: MCA (Reading, Mathematics, Science); an individual administration is required for MTAS administrations

Description: A student is tested individually or in a small-group setting. MDE does not define “small group” as a specific number of students; this is determined by the district.

When to select: A student may be tested in a different setting than planned for the majority of test administrations as needed to meet specific needs, such as to reduce distractions.

Notes for administration: An individual or small-group setting can be used for any student that would benefit from this smaller testing environment. In addition, an individual or small-group setting may be required for other supports or accommodations and will be specified when required. Consideration for a student requiring an individual or small-group setting should be taken when scheduling testing sessions and planning for testing sessions (for example, planning for staffing to monitor testing rooms).

REPEATED OR WRITTEN VERSION OF TESTING DIRECTIONS

Code: N/A

Allowed for: MCA (Reading, Mathematics, Science)

Description: For MCA, the Test Monitor repeats or writes out scripted directions from the applicable [Testing Directions](#) (from the *Script to Read to Students, Answering Questions and Providing Assistance*, and transcript of student directions (for online) sections).

When to select: This support may benefit a student who typically needs directions provided verbally or in written form more than one time to engage in assessments. Scripted directions may be repeated as needed, following the guidelines below. For written directions, Test Monitors should consider what is needed by a student; providing too much written information (which may also be repeated verbally, as needed) may be distracting or overwhelming.

Notes for administration: Test Monitors may repeat—but not paraphrase—the scripted instructions in the *Testing Directions*. Test Monitors must not read directions from a student’s screen or test book. The *Answering Questions and Providing Assistance* section of the *Testing Directions* includes information and guidance on how to address student questions during testing and provides some scenarios for student and classroom management. This information is provided to help evaluate what is appropriate to say and do while ensuring that students are able to demonstrate what they know independently. If Test Monitors are unsure how to assist in a situation that arises, they should follow school procedures for asking for assistance from others (such as the District or School Assessment Coordinator) before proceeding if possible.

Test Monitors may write information specific to the administration of the test on the board or in the room. Examples of allowable information include information about scheduling (for example, “We will stop after answering 25 questions.”, “We will stop testing at the end of the class period.”) and what students may do when they are done with testing (for example, “Read a book when you are done testing.”). Test Monitors may also write out any scripted information from the *Testing Directions*. Information in the directions that is not scripted (such as general encouragement) may not be written.

SIMPLIFY TESTING DIRECTIONS

Code: TD

Allowed for: MCA (Reading, Mathematics, Science)

Description: The Test Monitor can simplify or clarify the scripted [Testing Directions](#) using vocabulary that the individual student would understand so they would therefore know how to take the test. These directions are not provided by MDE.

When to select: This support may provide assistance for a student who is provided simplified directions in their daily instruction.

Notes for administration: The Test Monitor cannot change the meaning of the directions or provide information that would lead or cue the student. This is important, as the use of the *Testing Directions* ensures that tests are administered the same way for all students across the state and that students receive a score that accurately reflects what they know without any support, guidance, or unauthorized interference.

The use of this support, including the name of the adult providing the support, must be documented on the *Test Administration Report (TAR)*.

Accessibility Supports—Provided by School

AMPLIFICATION DEVICES

Code: N/A

Allowed for: MCA (Reading, Mathematics, Science); MTAS (Reading, Mathematics, Science)

Description: Student uses an amplification device, including personal hearing aids, FM systems, or other amplification systems.

When to select: This support may be provided to a student who normally uses these devices in instruction to amplify sounds.

Notes for administration: Any amplification device that can be heard by others requires the student to test in an individual setting.

If the device includes Bluetooth capabilities, the Test Monitor must confirm with the student that the audio is connected only to the testing device if testing online.

CALCULATOR (HANDHELD), MATHEMATICS MANIPULATIVES, OR ABACUS FOR SCIENCE MCA, GRADE 11 MATHEMATICS MCA, MATHEMATICS MTAS, AND SCIENCE MTAS

Code: N/A

Allowed for: Science MCA and grade 11 Mathematics MCA; MTAS (all grades Mathematics, Science)

Description: Student uses a handheld calculator for testing, or a student uses one or more of the following materials in place of or alongside a calculator:

- Mathematics manipulatives such as unifix cubes or base-10 blocks
- An abacus calculation tool

Standard, scientific, or graphing calculators with a talking feature may also be used in an individual setting if the need is documented in the IEP or 504 plan and the calculator policies in Chapter 8 and Appendix B are followed.

When to select: A handheld calculator may be provided to a student who normally uses a handheld calculator in instruction.

A student who may benefit from using mathematics manipulatives is typically identified as a student with visual disabilities or math-related disabilities, such as dyscalculia, and is a student with Learning Disabilities, Autism, Visual Impairments, or Intellectual Disabilities. MDE does not produce a comprehensive list of allowable manipulatives; email mde.testing@state.mn.us for specific questions about providing manipulatives.

For an abacus, a student with visual impairments or with documented processing impairments may benefit from the use of an abacus in place of a calculator.

Notes for administration: A handheld calculator, mathematics manipulatives, and abacus are considered universal supports ONLY for Science MCA and grade 11 Mathematics MCA due to test administration requirements.

- A handheld calculator in addition to or in place of the online calculator in TestNav may be used as a universal support. Refer to *Accommodations—Provided by School* in this chapter for information for grades 3–8 Mathematics MCA. Refer to *Calculator Use* in Chapter 8 for detailed information about calculator usage policies and procedures.
- A student may also use a handheld calculator with paper test materials (for a student with an IEP or 504 plan). Refer to *Calculator Use* in Chapter 8 for detailed information about calculator usage policies and procedures.
- For mathematics manipulatives or an abacus, the student must test in an individual setting or a small-group setting, if all students require the same support. There must be separation between students (such as dividers or cubicles) to ensure students cannot view the materials being used by another student. The Test Monitor must be able to actively monitor all students in the small group.
- For mathematics manipulatives, manipulatives can be the same color or different colors, but they must not be grouped or organized by the Test Monitor. Manipulatives that have any numbers or writing on them are not allowed.

For Mathematics MTAS and Science MTAS, a four-function calculator or any alternative device or system that the student uses as a calculator may be used on any task.

COLOR OVERLAY

Code: N/A

Allowed for: MCA (Reading, Mathematics, Science); MTAS (Reading, Mathematics, Science)

Description: A transparent colored sheet that is placed over a page of text or is affixed to a device screen.

When to select: This support may provide assistance to a student who normally uses this support to reduce visual stress when reading.

Notes for administration: None.

LOW-VISION AIDS

Code: N/A

Allowed for: MCA (Reading, Mathematics, Science); MTAS (Reading, Mathematics, Science)

Description: A device or tool designed to improve the visual performance of a person with low vision. Examples of low-vision aids are magnifying glasses, electronic magnifiers, cardboard cut-outs, and a larger monitor screen size and different resolution for online assessments.

When to select: A student who is accustomed to viewing enlarged text or graphics or navigation buttons may need low-vision aids to view content on paper or online assessments. This support also may meet the needs of a student with visual impairments and other print disabilities. The use of this support should be considered along

with other supports, such as accessibility features embedded in the online test (for example, magnifiers) or an accommodation (such as large print paper test books).

Notes for administration: The use of this accessibility support may result in the student needing additional overall time to complete the assessment.

SIGNED INTERPRETATION OF TESTING DIRECTIONS (MCA)

Code: OA

Allowed for: MCA (Reading, Mathematics, Science)

Description: Signed interpretation (ASL or signed English) of the [Testing Directions](#) may be provided for deaf or hard-of-hearing students (PearsonAccess Next > Preparing for Testing > Testing Directions). Only the scripted *Testing Directions* may be signed; no interpretations of test items or reading passages are allowed.

When to select: This support is provided for a student who typically accesses instruction through signed interpretation.

Notes for administration: The [Guidance for Universal Supports and Accommodations for Minnesota Statewide Assessments](#) includes detailed administration instructions for staff, including the linguistic rules and conventions of ASL and details on how to interpret specific academic terms for the math and science tests (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > District Resources).

All interpreters must complete the *Test Security Training* prior to accessing test materials, and the use of an interpreter, including the name of the person interpreting, must be documented on the *Test Administration Report* (TAR).

- If the interpreter is not a district employee (for example, employed by a region service cooperative), they must provide a record of their completed training. During test administration, they must be accompanied by a Test Monitor who is employed by the district and has completed all necessary training.
- If the interpreter is a district employee and also the Test Monitor, they must complete the required trainings in the *MCA Test Monitor* learning path, not just the *Test Security Training*, prior to accessing the test materials.

SIGNED INTERPRETATION OF TEST (MTAS)

Code: N/A

Allowed for: MTAS (Reading, Mathematics, Science)

Description: Signed interpretation (ASL or signed English) of any content that is intended to be provided or read to a student, including the task scripts and reading passages, may be provided for deaf or hard-of-hearing students.

When to select: This support is provided for a student who typically accesses instruction through signed interpretation.

Notes for administration: If the Test Administrator determines that a sign or signs will give clues to the answers to items, they must fingerspell those words. [Guidance for Universal Supports and Accommodations for](#)

[Minnesota Statewide Assessments](#) includes detailed administration instructions for staff, including the linguistic rules and conventions of ASL and details on how to interpret specific academic terms for the math and science tests (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > District Resources).

If the interpreter is not the Test Administrator, ensure the interpreter is provided access to the MTAS test materials up to five business days prior to test administration for review; during this preparation time, interpreters must keep test materials secure. The interpreter is required to complete the *Test Security Training*; the other required trainings in the *New MTAS Test Administrators – 1–2 years* learning path are also recommended so the interpreter is familiar with how the test is administered.

All interpreters must complete the *Test Security Training* prior to accessing test materials, and the use of an interpreter, including the name of the person interpreting, must be documented on the *Test Administration Report (TAR)*.

- If the interpreter is not a district employee (for example, employed by a region service cooperative), they must provide a record of their completed training. During test administration, they must be accompanied by a Test Monitor who is employed by the district and has completed all necessary training.
- If the interpreter is a district employee and also the Test Monitor, they must complete the required trainings in the *MCA Test Monitor* learning path, not just the *Test Security Training*, prior to accessing the test materials.

STYLUSES FOR DEVICES

Code: N/A

Allowed for: Online MCA (Reading, Mathematics, Science)

Description: A stylus may be used by the student to navigate through the online assessment, use tools, and indicate responses.

When to select: A stylus may provide assistance to a student with fine motor needs or print disabilities who normally uses it in daily instruction.

Notes for administration: None.

TEMPLATES TO REDUCE VISUAL PRINT FIELD

Code: N/A

Allowed for: MCA (Reading, Mathematics, Science); MTAS (Reading, Mathematics, Science)

Description: A material (such as a cardboard cutout) that blocks out part of the screen or test book. Refer to *Tools—Embedded in Test* in this chapter for information about the line reader mask embedded in the online MCA.

When to select: This support may help a student focus on one part of a question, reading passage, or science scene at a time by blocking out part of the screen or test book. These materials may provide assistance to a student who normally uses them in daily instruction.

Notes for administration: None.

TRANSLATED DIRECTIONS (MCA)

Code: TD

Allowed for: MCA (Reading, Mathematics, Science)

Description: The scripted portions of the online and paper [Testing Directions](#) may be translated into a language other than English in an oral or written format (PearsonAccess Next > Preparing for Testing > Testing Directions). The online and paper versions of the *Testing Directions* are posted annually in Hmong, Somali, and Spanish—refer to *Translated Directions* under *Accessibility Supports—Provided by MDE* in this chapter. Districts may translate the scripted directions into additional languages as needed.

For online testing, districts may also choose to turn on Spanish translation settings on the student testing device. This should only be used if a student typically uses this feature during instruction. Only the TestNav system text (for example, menus and buttons) are translated. All test content will display in English. Refer to Notes for administration below for additional details.

When to select: These translations may provide support to multilingual learners, including English learners, former English learners, or students in immersion or dual language programs.

- English and primary language listening proficiency are the main factors to consider when determining the need for translated directions, and not name, ethnicity, race, country of origin, or other demographic characteristics.
- The student may have received most or all of their instruction in English and may be unfamiliar with testing directions in their primary language.

Notes for administration: Translated directions may be provided in a small group if all the students require it. Otherwise, it must be provided to a student individually. In many cases, it will be helpful to provide the instructions both in English and in an additional language.

No translations of test items or reading passages are allowed. The following information provides requirements for translating the *Testing Directions*:

- For online MCAs, the student directions embedded in the online test can be translated using the transcript of the directions included in the *Testing Directions: Online*. The student directions cannot be translated from an individual student's screen.
- **NEW!** Written translations of the scripted directions may be provided to students. Consideration should be given to the student's literacy in that language and the use of written translations as a support in daily instruction.
- A district may also create an audio or video recording of the translated scripted *Testing Directions* and/or transcript of the student directions for a student to listen to. Because scripted instructions are used throughout the test administration, ensure the Test Monitor and/or student has a way to access the applicable scripted instructions at the appropriate times (for example, when nearing the end of the testing session).
 - If the student is using a separate device to listen to/watch the recording during testing, the device must be school-owned. The student must test in an individual setting to ensure that only the

recording is accessed; the student must not connect to the Internet or use other applications outside of that which is being used to listen to/watch the recording.

District staff may provide translations if they have sufficient knowledge and experience in the language, as determined by the district. It is recommended that interpreters have formal translation training and skills, whenever possible. If an interpreter outside of the district is needed to provide allowable translations, districts must use a local process to hire a qualified person. Districts arrange for and provide all translations. Interpreters cannot be family members. More information on interpreting in educational settings can be found in the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice for Educational Interpreters of Spoken Languages* available on the [English Learner Disability Resources](#) page of the MDE website (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Special Education > Diverse Populations > English Learner Disability Resources).

All interpreters must complete the *Test Security Training*.

- If the interpreter is not a district employee, they must provide a record of their completed training. During test administration, they must be accompanied by a Test Monitor who is employed by the district and has completed all necessary training.
- If the interpreter is a district employee and also the Test Monitor, they must complete the required trainings in the *MCA Test Monitor* learning path, not just the *Test Security Training*.

The use of a device to access translated content and/or the use of an interpreter, including the name of the person interpreting, must be documented on the *Test Administration Report (TAR)*.

INFO! Regarding translation settings in TestNav, only English and Spanish system languages are currently supported by TestNav. If a student's testing device is set to any other language, the TestNav user interface text will default to English. For Chromebooks, if the system language is set to Spanish but the TestNav user interface does not display in Spanish, the TestNav app will need to be removed and re-added as a kiosk app at the Google admin level (for example, in the Google admin account for a district/school that is used to manage all Chromebooks). This work-around needs to be completed each time a Chromebook's language setting is changed to Spanish until the issue is resolved. On all other supported platforms, TestNav system text is updated to Spanish as soon as the language is set.

TRANSLATED DIRECTIONS (MTAS)

Code: N/A

Allowed for: MTAS (Reading, Mathematics, Science)

Description: The Test Administrator may use the student's primary language to focus attention and give direction for how to interact with the task. The bold text in the Task Administration Manual scripts and text on Presentation Pages, Passages and/or Phenomena Books, and Response Option Cards may not be translated except as described below for word-to-word translations.

When to select: These translations may provide support to multilingual learners, including English learners, former English learners, or students in immersion or dual language programs. Considerations may include:

- English and primary language listening proficiency are the main factors to consider when determining the need for translated directions, and not name, ethnicity, race, country of origin, or other demographic characteristics.
- The student may have received most or all of their instruction in English and may be unfamiliar with testing directions in their primary language.

Notes for administration: Full translations of the tasks themselves are not allowed. In many cases, it will be helpful to provide the directions in English and the additional language.

District staff may provide translations if they have sufficient knowledge and experience in the language, as determined by the district. It is recommended that interpreters have formal translation training and skills, whenever possible. If an interpreter outside of the district is needed to provide allowable translations, districts must use a local process to hire a qualified person. Districts arrange for and provide all translations. Interpreters cannot be family members. More information on interpreting in educational settings can be found in the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice for Educational Interpreters of Spoken Languages* available on the [English Learner Disability Resources](#) page of the MDE website (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Special Education > Diverse Populations > English Learner Disability Resources).

All interpreters must complete the *Test Security Training*.

- If the interpreter is not a district employee, they must provide a record of their completed training. During test administration, they must be accompanied by a Test Administrator who is employed by the district and has completed all necessary training.
- If the interpreter is a district employee and also the Test Administrator, they must complete the required trainings in the applicable *MTAS Test Administrator* learning path, not just the *Test Security Training*.

The use of an interpreter, including the name of the person interpreting, must be documented on the *Test Administration Report (TAR)*.

VOICE FEEDBACK DEVICES

Code: N/A

Allowed for: MCA (Reading, Mathematics, Science); MTAS (Reading, Mathematics, Science)

Description: Voice feedback devices and whisper phones allow a student to vocalize as they read and work problems. This support also includes a student reading the test out loud in individual settings.

When to select: This support may benefit a student who normally vocalizes what they read in daily instruction.

Notes for administration: A student may not read the test aloud directly to the Test Monitor, and the Test Monitor cannot provide verbal or nonverbal prompts.

This support must be provided in an individual setting.

Code: OL

Allowed for: Mathematics MCA and Science MCA

Description: A commercial word-to-word dictionary contains mathematical and scientific terms in English and in the primary language of a given learner. No definitions or pictures may be provided—only direct translations of the terms—and a commercial dictionary must be used.

- Mathematics and science word-to-word dictionaries are available on the [Steinhardt Metropolitan Center website](#).
- ACT maintains a [list of bilingual word-to-word dictionaries](#) that are available commercially.

A word-to-word translation may also be provided to the student using an online translation program. When looking at applications or programs to provide this support, ensure that no definitions or pictures are provided. Because applications and programs can change frequently, MDE does not provide a list; however, note that Google Translate is **not** allowed because it provides definitions. For questions on the use of applications or programs, contact mde.testing@state.mn.us.

When to select: These materials or tools may provide support to multilingual learners, including English learners, former English learners, or students in immersion or dual language programs, who use them during instruction. Considerations may include:

- English and primary language proficiency are the main factors to consider when determining the need for translations, and not name, ethnicity, race, country of origin, or other demographic characteristics.
- A student who speaks a language other than English may not be a proficient reader of that language. Translated text may not be a useful support for this student.
- The student may have received most or all of their instruction in English and may be unfamiliar with academic vocabulary in their primary language.

Note: When considering a word-to-word dictionary, keep in mind that it should be appropriate for the respective grade level, containing only the words a learner at a given grade should be expected to know (for example, a fifth grade word-to-word dictionary would likely contain mathematical or scientific words children learn in fifth grade as well as words from lower grades). The Minnesota Academic Standards posted on the [Academic Standards \(K–12\)](#) section of the MDE website (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Academic Standards (K-12)) provide the basis for determining appropriate mathematical and scientific terms for each grade level.

Notes for administration: The student must use the dictionary or translation program to look up individual terms themselves; Test Monitors cannot translate the terms for the student. When using translation supports, entire test items cannot be looked up in a dual-language dictionary or typed into a translation program.

- Word-to-word dictionaries can be printed and provided to the student or made available electronically. If printed, the dictionary must be collected at the end of each test session and the Test Monitor must verify that no part of any test item was written in it. Following test administration, the dictionary must be securely disposed of if test content was written in it.

- If a word-to-word dictionary is accessed electronically or an online translation program is used:
 - The student must test in an individual setting to ensure only the dictionary/program is used. The Internet or other applications cannot be accessed.
 - TestNav will not allow other programs or applications to run at the same time as the test; therefore, the device used for the translation must be in addition to the testing device. The student must not connect to the Internet or use other applications outside of the program or application that is being used for translation. All devices used by the student must be school-owned devices.
 - If the online translation program has audio support for the term, the student may use it.

The use of a device to translate test content must be documented on the *Test Administration Report* (TAR).

WORD-TO-WORD TRANSLATIONS USING DICTIONARIES OR PROGRAMS FOR MATHEMATICS MTAS AND SCIENCE MTAS

Code: N/A

Allowed for: Mathematics MTAS and Science MTAS

Description: Mathematics and science terms in the task (bold text in the Task Administration Manual and/or information on the Presentation Page or Phenomena Book) or response options may be entered into a translation program or looked up in a dictionary.

A commercial word-to-word dictionary contains mathematical and scientific terms in English and in the primary language of a given learner. No definitions or pictures may be provided—only direct translations of the terms—and a commercial dictionary must be used.

- Mathematics and science word-to-word dictionaries are available on the [Steinhardt Metropolitan Center website](#).
- ACT maintains a [list of bilingual word-to-word dictionaries](#) that are available commercially.

When looking at online translation applications or programs to provide this support, ensure that no definitions or pictures are provided. Because applications and programs can change frequently, MDE does not provide a list; however, note that Google Translate is **not** allowed because it provides definitions. For questions on the use of applications or programs, contact mde.testing@state.mn.us.

When to select: These materials or tools may provide support to multilingual learners, including English learners, former English learners, or students in immersion or dual language programs, who use them during instruction. Considerations may include:

- English and primary language proficiency are the main factors to consider when determining the need for translations, and not name, ethnicity, race, country of origin, or other demographic characteristics.
- A student who speaks a language other than English may not be a proficient reader of that language. Translated text may not be a useful support for this student.
- The student may have received most or all of their instruction in English and may be unfamiliar with academic vocabulary in their primary language.

Note: When considering a word-to-word dictionary, keep in mind that it should be appropriate for the respective grade level, containing only the words a learner at a given grade should be expected to know (for

example, a fifth grade word-to-word dictionary would likely contain mathematical or scientific words children learn in fifth grade as well as words from lower grades). The Minnesota Academic Standards posted on the [Academic Standards \(K–12\)](#) section of the MDE website (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Academic Standards (K-12)) provide the basis for determining appropriate mathematical and scientific terms for each grade level.

Notes for administration: The student may enter/look up the term or may request the Test Administrator to enter it/look it up. Note that only individual terms may be entered or looked up, not the entire test item.

The use of a device to translate test content must be documented on the *Test Administration Report (TAR)*.

Accessibility Supports—Provided by MDE

MATHEMATICS TABLES FOR GRADE 11 MATHEMATICS MCA AND MATHEMATICS MTAS

Code: N/A

Allowed for: Grade 11 Mathematics MCA and Mathematics MTAS (all grades)

Description: Student uses multiplication or hundreds table provided by MDE while taking the grade 11 Mathematics MCA or any grade of Mathematics MTAS in place of or alongside a calculator. Only paper versions of the multiplication and hundreds tables posted on the [PearsonAccess Next](#) website may be provided during testing (Preparing for Testing > Mathematics Accommodations).

When to select: A student with visual processing or spatial perception needs or a documented and persistent calculation disability (for example, dyscalculia) may find this accommodation beneficial. Ensure the student is familiar with these formats and/or uses them during instruction.

Notes for administration: The use of mathematics tables is considered a universal support ONLY for grade 11 Mathematics MCA (not grades 3–8 Mathematics MCA) due to test administration requirements. It is also considered a universal support for all grades of Mathematics MTAS. Refer to *Accommodations—Provided by School* in this chapter for information for grades 3–8 Mathematics MCA.

- A student may test online or use paper test materials (for a student with an IEP or 504 plan) when using this support because a calculator is allowed on the entire grade 11 Mathematics MCA.
- If the student uses the same table(s) for instruction and testing, Test Monitors must ensure that they do not have any additional writing on them before testing. If they do contain any writing, a clean copy must be provided.
- The tables must be collected at the end of each test session and kept as a secure material, as the student may have written parts of test items on them. Following test administration, the tables must be securely disposed of.

TRANSLATED TESTING DIRECTIONS IN HMONG, SPANISH, OR SOMALI

Code: TD

Allowed for: MCA (Reading, Mathematics, Science)

Description: The scripted portions of the online and paper *Testing Directions* are posted annually in Hmong, Somali, and Spanish on the [Testing Directions](#) page of the PearsonAccess Next website (PearsonAccess Next > Preparing for Testing > Testing Directions). Districts may translate the scripted directions into additional languages as needed and provide audio/visual recording—refer to *Translated Directions* under *Accessibility Supports—Provided by School* in this chapter.

When to select: These translations may provide support to multilingual learners, including English learners, former English learners, or students in immersion or dual language programs. Considerations may include:

- English and primary language listening proficiency are the main factors to consider when determining the need for translated directions, and not name, ethnicity, race, country of origin, or other demographic characteristics.
- The student may have received most or all of their instruction in English and may be unfamiliar with testing directions in their primary language.

Notes for administration: Translated directions may be provided in a small group if all the students require it. Otherwise, it must be provided to a student individually. In many cases, it will be helpful to provide the instructions both in English and in an additional language.

The use of translated directions, including the name of the person providing the translation, must be documented on the *Test Administration Report* (TAR).

WORD-TO-WORD TRANSLATIONS USING WORD LISTS FOR MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

Code: OL

Allowed for: Mathematics MCA and Science MCA

Description: Academic terms and direction words are translated in the following languages: Amharic, Arabic, Chinese, Hmong, Karen, Khmer*, Laotian*, Oromo, Russian, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese. The lists must be printed versions of the current-year lists posted on the [Translated Word Lists](#) page of the PearsonAccess Next website (Preparing for Testing > Translated Word Lists).

*The Khmer and Laotian lists will not be updated in future years as these languages are no longer in the top most populous languages statewide; however, these lists will remain posted until future updates are required.

Note: These lists are intended only for the purpose of providing this support during testing and are not intended as the basis for curriculum and instruction.

When to select: These lists may provide support to multilingual learners, including English learners, former English learners, or students in immersion or dual language programs, who use them during instruction. Considerations may include:

- English and primary language proficiency are the main factors to consider when determining the need for translations, and not name, ethnicity, race, country of origin, or other demographic characteristics.
- A student who speaks a language other than English may not be a proficient reader of that language. Translated text may not be a useful support for this student.

- The student may have received most or all of their instruction in English and may be unfamiliar with academic vocabulary in their primary language.

Notes for administration: [Instructions](#) for using and printing the lists are also available on the PearsonAccess Next website (Preparing for Testing > Translated Word Lists).

The list may be provided in conjunction with the online test (with or without other supports, including the pop-up translation) or with paper test materials (for a student with an IEP or 504 plan).

If a student uses these translated word lists during instruction, Test Monitors must ensure that the list does not have any additional writing on it before it is used for testing. The list must be collected at the end of each test session and kept as a secure material, as the student may have written parts of test items on it. Following test administration, the lists must be securely disposed of.

Districts may not translate additional terms or translate their own lists, nor are word lists allowed for Reading MCA. In addition, districts may not translate these lists into languages not available on PearsonAccess Next. If a student needs word-to-word support in a different language, districts can consider using a commercial word-to-word dual-language dictionary or online translation program if the student uses these supports during instruction; these supports are described previously in this section.

Accessibility Supports—Embedded in Test

The following accessibility features are available in TestNav for students to access. To review what these features look like and determine which students they may be more appropriate for, refer to the [Student Readiness Tools](#) page (PearsonAccess Next > Preparing for Testing > Student Readiness Tools). The educator resources contain important information on how tools and accessibility features in TestNav interact with each other.

Notes for administration: These notes are applicable to all accessibility features so are not repeated under each feature below.

Students must be provided practice and become familiar with accessibility features prior to test administration. Test Monitors must not remind students of any test-taking or academic strategies (such as using a certain online tool). Help of this sort should be provided prior to testing, such as when the [Student Readiness Tools](#) are used to prepare students for testing (PearsonAccess Next > Preparing for Testing > Student Readiness Tools). The only times when Test Monitors may provide additional guidance are included in the *Testing Directions*. The *Answering Questions and Providing Assistance* section outlines what help may be given during testing. For example, Test Monitors may verbally describe the functionality of a feature if a student cannot move forward, but they must not demonstrate it.

ANSWER MASKING

Code: N/A

Allowed for: MCA (Reading, Mathematics, Science)

Description: The answer masking accessibility feature lets a student choose which answer choices will show on the screen. It is available only for multiple-choice and multiple-response questions.

When to select: This feature may be most beneficial for a student with attention difficulties, print disabilities, and certain visual impairments who use a similar strategy or feature during instruction to visually reduce content.

Notes for administration: No additional notes other than what is specified at the beginning of this section.

COLOR CONTRAST

Code: N/A

Allowed for: MCA (Reading, Mathematics, Science)

Description: The color contrast tool lets a student change the color of the screen and words in TestNav. The available color choices are:

- Black on White (Default)
- Black on Cream
- Black on Light Blue
- Black on Light Magenta
- White on Black
- Yellow on Blue
- Gray on Green

When to select: This feature may be most beneficial for a student who uses various contrasts between the text and background color on other devices during instruction for any reason including attention difficulties, print disabilities, and certain visual impairments.

Notes for administration: No additional notes other than what is specified at the beginning of this section.

LINE READER MASK

Code: N/A

Allowed for: MCA (Reading, Mathematics, Science)

Description: The line reader mask accessibility feature blocks out part of the screen using a gray box with a small window. The size of both the gray box and window can be adjusted.

When to select: This feature helps a student focus on one part of a question, reading passage, or science scene at a time by blocking out part of the screen. A student who uses a similar strategy or feature during instruction for any reason including visual processing needs may benefit from this feature.

Notes for administration: No additional notes other than what is specified at the beginning of this section.

MAGNIFIER

Code: N/A

Allowed for: MCA (Reading, Mathematics, Science)

Description: The magnifier accessibility feature lets a student make part of the screen larger by dragging a magnified box over the area they want to make larger.

When to select: This feature may be most beneficial for a student who uses a similar feature during instruction to magnify a specific part of the screen.

Notes for administration: No additional notes other than what is specified at the beginning of this section.

POP-UP TRANSLATIONS IN HMONG, SPANISH, AND SOMALI FOR MATHEMATICS MCA AND SCIENCE MCA

Code: HM (Hmong), SO (Somali), or SP (Spanish)

Allowed for: Mathematics MCA and Science MCA

Description: The pop-up translation accessibility feature provides translations for academic terms and direction words. Words that have been translated are underlined in the online test. When selected, a pop-up window with the translation appears. No audio is provided for the translations.

When to select: These translations may provide support to multilingual learners, including English learners, former English learners, or students in immersion or dual language programs. Considerations may include:

- English and primary language proficiency are the main factors to consider when determining the need for translations, and not name, ethnicity, race, country of origin, or other demographic characteristics.
- A student who speaks a language other than English may not be a proficient reader of that language. Translated text may not be a useful support for this student, and audio is not provided in pop-up translations.
- The student may have received most or all of their instruction in English and may be unfamiliar with academic vocabulary in their primary language.
- Pop-up translations in the online tests may be a distraction and add testing time for a student who does not need them or cannot derive benefit from them.

Notes for administration: The Hmong (HM), Somali (SO), and Spanish (SP) online pop-up translation codes cannot be used together.

STANDARD TEXT-TO-SPEECH FOR MATHEMATICS MCA AND SCIENCE MCA

Code: N/A

Allowed for: Mathematics MCA and Science MCA

Description: The standard text-to-speech accessibility feature provides computer-generated audio, and a student can select the parts of the item they want to listen to.

When to select: Standard text-to-speech may be beneficial for a student with reading-related, vision, and visual processing needs. A student who uses this feature during daily instruction may benefit from this support.

Standard text-to-speech may be most beneficial for multilingual learners whose listening proficiency may be higher than their reading proficiency.

Notes for administration: No additional notes other than what is specified at the beginning of this section.

ZOOM FEATURE

Code: N/A

Allowed for: MCA (Reading, Mathematics, Science)

Description: A student can use the Zoom accessibility feature to make the entire screen larger by using keyboard commands or pinching on touchscreen devices. TestNav supports zoom levels of up to 500%.

When to select: This feature may be most beneficial for a student with vision impairments who uses a similar strategy or feature during instruction. The user interface is designed to respond to zoom by making the assessment content larger, and also collapsing menu systems (much like when the mobile version of a website is accessed). This means that a student who is instructionally using zoom within a browser may have a similar experience within TestNav.

Notes for administration: No additional notes other than what is specified at the beginning of this section.

Accommodations for Standards-Based Accountability Assessments

Accommodations are changes in the way a test is administered, and are meant to ensure equal access to the assessment. Accommodations are only available to students with an IEP or who qualify for a 504 plan. All needed accommodations should be documented annually in the IEP or 504 plan prior to testing. For more information about documenting accommodations in the IEP or 504 plan, refer to the contacts listed at the front of this manual.



Accommodations are only available for students who have an IEP or who qualify for a 504 plan.

Use the information in the following sections to determine appropriate accommodations for students; the accommodations are divided into three categories: provided by the school, provided by MDE, or embedded in the online test. **NEW!** The *Guidelines for Administration of Accommodations* is no longer posted as a separate stand-alone document on PearsonAccess Next. All applicable guidelines for staff are included in the [Guidance for Universal Supports and Accommodations for Minnesota Statewide Assessments](#) (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > District Resources).

Table 6. 2023–24 Summary of Accommodations on MCAs

| Accommodations | Code | Reading MCA | Math MCA | Science MCA | Individual Setting May Be Required | Data Entry Required | Test Administration Report Required |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-------------|----------------|-------------|------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Accommodations – Provided by School | | | | | | | |
| Allow student to read a reading test aloud, recording their voice for later playback | MT | ✓ | | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Assistive technology | AT | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Calculator (handheld), mathematics manipulatives, or abacus for grades 3–8 Mathematics MCA | HC | | ✓ | | | ✓ | |
| Scribe | SC | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Paper only | ✓ |
| Accommodations – Provided by MDE | | | | | | | |
| Mathematics tables for grades 3–8 Mathematics MCA | HC | | ✓ (Gr. 3–8) | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Paper test book (regular print) | 12 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Paper test book (large print) | 18 or 24 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Paper test book (braille) | BC or BU | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Script (mathematics) | MS | | ✓ | | | ✓ | |
| Script (science) | MS | | | ✓ | | Paper only | |
| Script (signed interpretation) | MS OA | | ✓ | ✓ | | Paper only | ✓ |
| Accommodations – Embedded in Test | | | | | | | |
| Accommodated text-to-speech | MC | | ✓ | ✓ | | | |

MDE recognizes that IEP and 504 plan teams may consider accommodations or supports for the MCA that are not specifically addressed yet may be appropriate for a particular student and assessment. Some IEP or 504 teams may identify something as an accommodation on the student’s IEP or 504 plan that MDE considers a

universal support for statewide assessments. If IEP or 504 plan teams determine the need for an accommodation not specifically addressed in the information below, email mde.testing@state.mn.us.

Providing Accommodations in Injury Situations

In some cases, a student with an injury may be allowed to have an accommodation if supported by medical documentation (for example, a student with a broken arm having the scribe accommodation, or a student with a concussion requiring a paper test book), even if they do not have an IEP or 504 plan. Refer to the information below or email mde.testing@state.mn.us to verify if an accommodation is allowed. The medical documentation must be kept with the *Test Administration Report* (TAR) that documents the use of an accommodation in these instances. When possible, practice with the accommodation should take place before test administration.

Entering Student Responses Online for MCA Paper Accommodations

In order to be scored, student responses in paper test books for the Reading, Mathematics, and Science MCAs must be entered online by district or school staff in a Data Entry form in TestNav during the testing window. Student responses in MCA paper test books will NOT be scanned and scored when they are returned to Pearson; only student responses entered online are scored. Students cannot enter their own responses into TestNav. For test security purposes, TestNav can only be accessed for entering student responses from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. on weekdays throughout the testing windows.

The responses must be entered exactly as the student responded, without edits or changes. The test items include specific instructions for students on how the item should be answered, and the student's answers cannot be modified if they did not follow these instructions. The *MCA Data Entry User Guide* posted annually on the [User Guides](#) page of the PearsonAccess Next website includes specific guidance for data entry of specific item types (PearsonAccess Next > Resources & Training > User Guides).

MTAS Accommodations

Districts are not required to document for MDE which accommodations are provided on MTAS. Accommodating student needs is integral to MTAS, and the Test Administrator may provide needed supports (for example, objects, tactile graphics, counters, or any type of calculator) or adapt test materials (for example, enlarging materials or providing a braille version) as long as the support is not specifically prohibited in the task script. For MTAS only, students may use assistive technology devices to indicate responses. For information on allowable test administration activities, refer to the [MTAS Task Administration Manual](#) (PearsonAccess Next > Resources & Training > User Guides) or Chapter 5 of this *Procedures Manual*.

Specific guidance for accommodations for MTAS includes assistive technology below.

Accommodation Codes

All MCA accommodations require the District Assessment Coordinator to enter a code in Pretest Editing in Test WES. School staff and District and School Assessment Coordinators need to ensure there is a process in place to communicate about and provide needed accommodations to students during testing.

Many universal supports and accommodations can be used together, but others cannot. Make sure supports and accommodations are compatible and that the applicable codes are indicated correctly. Detailed information

about conflicting codes for Pretest Editing is provided in the [Pretest Editing User Guide](#) in Test WES (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Business and Finance > Data Submissions > Test WES).

- For MTAS, accommodations are not indicated, as described previously.
- For MCA, accommodation codes are indicated, removed, or changed in Test WES during Pretest Editing throughout the testing windows. After testing, districts are able to indicate or correct accommodation codes in Test WES during Posttest Editing.

Accommodations—Provided by School

ALLOW STUDENT TO READ A READING TEST ALOUD, RECORDING THEIR VOICE FOR LATER PLAYBACK

Code: MT

Allowed for: Reading MCA

Description: A student may record their voice while reading the reading test aloud and replay the recording while taking the test.

When to select: A student who is a struggling reader, especially one who has difficulty decoding information when reading, may benefit from this support on the Reading MCA when other read-aloud supports are not allowed.

NEW! This accommodation is now limited to a student with an IEP or 504 plan. While previously allowed for multilingual learners, it is not a common strategy used in English learner instruction.

Notes for administration:

- This accommodation requires the student to test in an individual setting.
- Recording must be done independently by the student without the Test Monitor providing verbal or nonverbal prompts. A student may not read the test aloud directly to the Test Monitor.
- The device used for the audio recording must be school-owned; the Internet or applications beyond the recording function cannot be accessed. Any recordings must be deleted after each test session; therefore, the student should finish all items associated with a passage before stopping testing for the day.
- The use of a device to record test content, including the name of the person deleting the test content, must be documented on the *Test Administration Report (TAR)*.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Code: AT

Allowed for: MCA (Reading, Mathematics, Science); MTAS (Reading, Mathematics, Science)

Description: Technology that is used to maintain, increase, or improve the functional capabilities of a student with disabilities. For MCA, the following are the approved uses of assistive technology devices:

- Use of a device for scratch paper is allowed as long as Internet access is turned off and other applications are not accessed. In addition, the student must be the one to recreate the item as needed, and all test content must be erased at the end of each test session. The student must test in an individual setting to ensure the device is used only for scratch paper.
- Use of a device calculator application is allowed as long as the calculator used follows the guidelines in Chapter 8 and Appendix B (including calculator memory clearing), Internet access is turned off, and other applications are not accessed. The student must test in an individual setting to ensure the device is used only as a calculator and that the required type of calculator is used (four-function, scientific, or graphing). The device cannot be used in conjunction with the online grades 3–8 Mathematics MCA—only with paper test materials. For Science MCA or grade 11 Mathematics MCA, the device could be used in conjunction with the online test or paper test materials.
- Use of an electronic notetaker for braille to store information with the use of a braille keyboard and/or standard keyboard is allowed. Use of audio features on an electronic notetaker is allowable if the IEP or 504 plan specifies it. If the audio feature is used, the device must be used in an individual setting to play back text the student has entered. The Test Monitor is responsible for monitoring that the student is using the audio feature only to enter and play back notes, and not for any portion of the passage or test items. Internet access cannot be available, and calculator use must follow the guidelines in Chapter 8 and Appendix B. Any notes must be deleted following each test session.

For all other questions on the use of assistive technology for a student, including a specific device or software, contact MDE at mde.testing@state.mn.us.

When to select: Assistive technology is most beneficial for a student who uses these features during instruction.

Notes for administration: Failure to comply with all conditions above may result in a test invalidation. For online testing, the device used as assistive technology must be in addition to the device used for testing. TestNav will not allow other programs or applications to run at the same time as the test, which means a student may be using two tablets or a tablet and a computer, for example.

For MTAS only, students may use assistive technology devices to indicate responses.

The use of a device to record test content, including the name of the person deleting the test content, must be documented on the *Test Administration Report* (TAR).

CALCULATOR (HANDHELD), MATHEMATICS MANIPULATIVES, OR ABACUS FOR GRADES 3–8 MATHEMATICS MCA

Code: HC

Allowed for: Grades 3–8 Mathematics MCA

Description: A student who requires a handheld calculator, mathematics manipulatives (such as unifix cubes or base-10 blocks), or an abacus calculation tool for testing (rather than the online calculator available in TestNav) must use paper test materials, follow the calculator use policies in Chapter 8 and Appendix B, and only use the calculator/manipulatives/abacus for segments where calculators are allowed.

Standard, scientific, or graphing calculators with a talking feature may also be used in an individual setting if the need is documented in the IEP or 504 plan and the calculator policies in Chapter 8 and Appendix B are followed.

When to select: A handheld calculator may be provided to a student who normally uses a handheld calculator in instruction and requires it instead of the online calculator available in TestNav.

A student who may benefit from using mathematics manipulatives is typically identified as a student with visual disabilities or math-related disabilities, such as dyscalculia, and is a student with Learning Disabilities, Autism, Visual Impairments, or Intellectual Disabilities. MDE does not produce a comprehensive list of allowable manipulatives; email mde.testing@state.mn.us for specific questions about providing manipulatives.

For an abacus, a student with visual impairments or with documented processing impairments may benefit from the use of an abacus in place of a calculator.

Note that because this accommodation requires a student to move from an online test to a paper test, the student loses the benefits of online testing, including interactive test items and an adaptive test tailored to their skill level.

Notes for administration: A handheld calculator, mathematics manipulatives, or an abacus are considered an accommodation only for grades 3–8 Mathematics MCA due to the fact that the online assessment is adaptive, which makes it difficult for the Test Monitor to verify when a student is taking non-calculator allowed items. Because the use of a handheld calculator on these items would invalidate what is being assessed, the student is required to test on paper.

- The student must use the handheld calculator, mathematics manipulatives, or an abacus on the segments where calculators are allowed.
- For mathematics manipulatives or an abacus, the student must test in an individual setting or a small-group setting if all students require the same support. There must be separation between students (such as dividers or cubicles) to ensure students cannot view the materials being used by another student. The Test Monitor must be able to actively monitor all students in the small group.
- For mathematics manipulatives, manipulatives can be the same color or different colors, but they must not be grouped or organized by the Test Monitor. Manipulatives that have any numbers or writing on them are not allowed.

Since the student is testing in a paper test book, district staff must enter all student responses online within the testing window in order for the test to be scored. Refer to *Entering Student Responses Online for MCA Paper Accommodations* earlier in this chapter.

Notes:

- A 12-point regular print test book will be automatically shipped if this code is indicated in Pretest Editing by Jan. 19; after this date, the test book must be ordered as an additional order in PearsonAccess Next.
- If a student’s IEP or 504 plan indicates the use of any of these supports (HC) and a 12-point regular print test book (12), only one code can be indicated in Pretest Editing; a 12-point test book is automatically sent when either code is indicated by Jan. 19.
- If a student’s IEP or 504 plan indicates the use of any of these supports (HC) and script (MS), only the MS is indicated in Pretest Editing; a 12-point test book is automatically sent when the script is indicated by Jan. 19.

- If a student’s IEP or 504 plan indicates HC, MS, and 12, only the MS code is indicated in Pretest Editing; a 12-point test book is automatically sent when the script is indicated by Jan. 19.

Refer to *Universal Supports—Provided by School* in this chapter for information for Science MCA, grade 11 Mathematics MCA, Mathematics MTAS, and Science MTAS.

SCRIBE

Code: SC

Allowed for: MCA (Reading, Mathematics, Science)

Description: An adult helps a student complete testing in instances when visual or motor difficulties, including injuries, prevent the student from indicating their own responses.

- Scribes for online tests will navigate the test, access text-to-speech and other tools (as requested by the student), and enter all test item responses provided by the student directly into the online test.
- Scribes for paper tests will indicate the responses provided by the student into the paper test book.
 - An audio recording may be used by the student to record and edit answers for paper test materials if the student is unable to mark their answers or uses similar strategies in instruction. Audio recording cannot be used with the online MCA because each item must have an answer entered in order to move forward in the test.

When to select: A student with significant motor or processing difficulties may benefit from this accommodation. The student’s IEP or 504 plan should document the need for a scribe, except in injury situations. The student should be competent in the use of a scribe as determined by the student’s IEP or 504 plan team.

Notes for administration: This accommodation must be provided in an individual setting so as not to disrupt other students who are testing.

Scribes cannot read aloud student responses or any part of the test, and they must be impartial and experienced in transcription. The student must be given the opportunity to review their responses. The [Guidance for Universal Supports and Accommodations for Minnesota Statewide Assessments](#) includes detailed administration instructions for staff (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > District Resources).

All scribes must complete the required trainings in the *MCA Test Monitor* learning path prior to test administration. The use of a scribe, including the name(s) of the district staff completing the transcription, must be documented on the *Test Administration Report (TAR)*.

If the student is testing using a paper test book, district staff must enter all student responses online within the testing window in order for the test to be scored. Refer to *Entering Student Responses Online for MCA Paper Accommodations* earlier in this chapter. Note: Entering student responses online from paper test books is not considered a scribe accommodation. For example, if the student uses a large print test book, they indicate their responses directly in the test book. The student responses must be entered online by district staff in order to be scored, which is not considered a scribe accommodation.

If audio recording is used, the device must be school-owned; the Internet or applications beyond the recording function cannot be accessed. Any recordings must be deleted after each test session; therefore, the student should finish all items associated with a passage before stopping testing for the day. The use of a device to record test content, including the name of the person deleting the test content, must be documented on the *Test Administration Report (TAR)*.

Accommodations—Provided by MDE

MATHEMATICS TABLES FOR GRADES 3–8 MATHEMATICS MCA

Code: HC

Allowed for: Grades 3–8 Mathematics MCA

Description: Student uses multiplication or hundreds tables provided by MDE while taking the Mathematics MCA in place of or alongside a calculator. Only paper versions of the multiplication and hundreds tables posted on the [PearsonAccess Next](#) website may be provided during testing (Preparing for Testing > Mathematics Accommodations).

A student who requires these tables rather than the online calculator available in TestNav must test using a paper test book, follow the calculator use policies in Chapter 8 and Appendix B, and only use these tables for segments where calculators are allowed.

When to select: A student with visual processing or spatial perception needs or a documented and persistent calculation disability (for example, dyscalculia) may find this accommodation beneficial. Ensure the student is familiar with these formats and/or uses them during instruction.

Notes for administration: Use of these materials in place of the online calculator is considered an accommodation only for grades 3–8 Mathematics MCA due to the fact that the online assessment is adaptive, which makes it difficult for the Test Monitor to verify when a student is taking non-calculator allowed items. Because the use of these materials on these items would invalidate what is being assessed, the student is required to test on paper.

- The student must use a paper test book and only use the mathematics tables on the segments where calculators are allowed.
- If a student uses the same table(s) for instruction and testing, Test Monitors must ensure that they do not have any additional writing on them before testing. If they do contain any writing, a clean copy must be provided.
- The tables must be collected at the end of each test session and kept as a secure material, as the student may have written parts of test items on them. Following test administration, the tables must be securely disposed of.
- The student must test in an individual setting or a small-group setting if all students require the same support. There must be separation between students (such as dividers or cubicles) to ensure students cannot view the materials being used by another student. The Test Monitor must be able to actively monitor all students in the small group.

Since the student is testing in a paper test book, district staff must enter all student responses online within the testing window in order for the test to be scored. Refer to *Entering Student Responses Online for MCA Paper Accommodations* earlier in this chapter.

Notes:

- A 12-point regular print test book will be automatically shipped if this code is indicated in Pretest Editing by Jan. 19; after this date, the test book must be ordered as an additional order in PearsonAccess Next.
- If a student’s IEP or 504 plan indicates the use of these tables (HC) and a 12-point regular print test book (12), only one code can be indicated in Pretest Editing; a 12-point test book is automatically sent when either code is indicated by Jan. 19.
- If a student’s IEP or 504 plan indicates the use of these tables (HC) and script (MS), only the MS is indicated in Pretest Editing; a 12-point test book is automatically sent when the script is indicated by Jan. 19.
- If a student’s IEP or 504 plan indicates the use of any of these supports (HC, MS, and 12), only the MS code is indicated in Pretest Editing; a 12-point test book is automatically sent when the script is indicated by Jan. 19.

Refer to *Universal Supports—Provided by School* for information for grade 11 Mathematics MCA.

PAPER TEST BOOK (REGULAR PRINT)

Code: 12

Allowed for: MCA (Reading, Mathematics, Science)

Description: A 12-point regular print test book for Reading, Mathematics, and Science MCAs may be used by any student with an IEP or 504 plan whose disability prevents them from accessing the content on a computer or device.

When to select: Use of this accommodation must be determined by the IEP or 504 team rather than student or administrator preference.

In some cases, a student with an injury that prevents them from testing online (for example, concussion restrictions) may be allowed to use a paper test book if supported by medical documentation, even if they do not have an IEP or 504 plan. Refer to *Providing Accommodations in Injury Situations* earlier in this chapter.

Notes for administration: Since the student is testing in a paper test book, district staff must enter all student responses online within the testing window in order for the test to be scored. Refer to *Entering Student Responses Online for MCA Paper Accommodations* earlier in this chapter.

Notes:

- A 12-point regular print test book will be automatically shipped if this code is indicated in Pretest Editing by Jan. 19; after this date, the test book must be ordered as an additional order in PearsonAccess Next.
- Paper test books (12, 18, 24, BC, or BU) cannot be used together.

- For Mathematics MCA, if a student’s IEP or 504 plan indicates a 12-point regular print test book (12) and script (MS), only the MS code is indicated in Pretest Editing; a 12-point test book is automatically sent when the script is indicated by Jan. 19. For Science MCA, both codes need to be indicated if a student requires the paper test book and the script.
- If a student’s IEP or 504 plan indicates 12 and handheld calculator or mathematics manipulatives/tables/abacus (HC) for mathematics, only one code can be indicated in Pretest Editing; a 12-point test book is automatically sent when either code is indicated by Jan. 19.
- If a student’s IEP or 504 plan indicates a 12, MS, and HC for mathematics, only the MS code is indicated in Pretest Editing; a 12-point test book is automatically sent when the script is indicated by Jan. 19.
- With all paper mathematics or science test books, it is automatically assumed that a handheld calculator will be needed.

PAPER TEST BOOK (LARGE PRINT)

Code: 18 or 24

Allowed for: MCA (Reading, Mathematics, Science)

Description: A large print test book has an increased font size. Large print test books are available in 18-point and 24-point fonts.

When to select: This accommodation is beneficial for a student with low vision who needs an increased font size to see the test items and typically accesses instruction through similar materials, as determined by the IEP or 504 plan team. The use of this accommodation may be considered along with other supports, such as low-vision aids (for example, magnifying glasses).

INFO! In addition, the online test may also be considered to determine if it meets an individual student’s needs due to the following features available in TestNav:

- TestNav supports zoom levels of up to 500%. The user interface is designed to respond to zoom by making the assessment content larger, and also collapsing menu systems (much like when the mobile version of a website is accessed). This means that a student who is instructionally using zoom within a browser may have a similar experience within TestNav.
- A student can also connect an external display to a laptop (provided the laptop is configured to display to the screen while the laptop is closed). This means that a student could take an assessment and use a 27 inch or larger display, or even connect to a projector provided the device supports this. TestNav does not block external display access; it does block access to multiple displays at one time.

Notes for administration: Since the student is testing in a paper test book, district staff must enter all student responses online within the testing window in order for the test to be scored. Refer to *Entering Student Responses Online for MCA Paper Accommodations* earlier in this chapter.

Notes:

- The applicable test book will be automatically shipped if the code is indicated in Pretest Editing by Jan. 19; after this date, it must be ordered as an additional order in PearsonAccess Next.

- Paper test books (12, 18, 24, BC, or BU) cannot be used together.

PAPER TEST BOOK (BRAILLE)

Code: BC or BU

Allowed for: MCA (Reading, Mathematics, Science)

Description: A braille version of the test book is available to any student who is blind or partially sighted and is competent in the braille system, as determined by the IEP or 504 plan team. Unified English Braille (UEB) format is used for braille test materials. Both contracted and uncontracted versions are available; contracted braille uses the same letters, punctuation, and numbers as uncontracted, but adds abbreviations, contractions and other short forms of words.

When to select: This accommodation is provided for a student who is blind or partially sighted and typically uses braille to access instruction through similar materials, as determined by the IEP or 504 plan team.

Notes for administration: *Test Monitor Notes for Braille* are provided along with the braille test books for the Test Monitor to reference during test administration. A Test Monitor administering a braille test should be provided access to the *Test Monitor Notes for Braille* and the corresponding test books up to 5 business days prior to the scheduled administration. Test Monitors must complete the required trainings in the *MCA Test Monitor* learning path prior to accessing the test materials, and they must keep the test materials secure as they prepare for testing. The *Test Monitor Notes for Braille* include the *Script to Read to Students* section of the *Testing Directions: Paper* to allow the scripted instructions to be tailored to the braille administration, as needed, and for ease of administration. Test Monitors will still need to refer the *Testing Directions* for the other sections.

A student taking a braille test may need more time to test than print readers, and this should be taken into account when scheduling test administration. Student responses may be recorded in one of the following ways, which should be discussed with the student prior to test administration; some require additional accommodation codes to be documented:

- In the braille test book by the student
- Dictated to a scribe by the student (SC)
- Using assistive technology (such as a typewriter, word processor, braille writer, electronic notetaker, slate and stylus) (AT)

Since the student is testing in a paper test book, district staff must enter all student responses online within the testing window in order for the test to be scored. Refer to *Entering Student Responses Online for MCA Paper Accommodations* earlier in this chapter.

Notes:

- Each year, the code will default to the BC code in Pretest Editing; districts must change the code to BU if a student requires uncontracted materials. The applicable braille test book will be automatically shipped if the code is indicated in Pretest Editing by Jan. 19; after this date, it must be ordered as an additional order in PearsonAccess Next.
- Paper test books (12, 18, 24, BC, or BU) cannot be used together.

- In Posttest Editing and reporting, the accommodation code appears as BR for all braille materials; BC and BU are used only during Pretest Editing for ordering the test materials.

SCRIPT (MATHEMATICS)

Code: MS

Allowed for: Mathematics MCA

Description: The Test Monitor reads from the script while the student responds directly into the paper test book. The script is for use by the Test Monitor only.

Because the online mathematics test is adaptive and the test items presented vary by student, the script must be administered with a paper test book (regular print, large print, or braille test book).

When to select: This accommodation may be beneficial for a student with reading-related disabilities, or by a student who is blind and does not yet have adequate braille skills. If not used regularly during instruction and/or the student does not know the content that the items are assessing, this accommodation is likely to be confusing and may impede the performance on assessments.

The script requires that Test Monitors read all the text for labels, graphs, and charts, which may be beneficial only for a limited number of students—for example, those who may require language or visual processing supports. Cognitive overload may occur if a student is presented with too much visual and aural information simultaneously, resulting in the student being unable to process the information.

If the IEP or 504 plan requires read-aloud support, consider if the student needs this support from a human reader or if the standard text-to-speech available in the online test can provide it; if the student needs the additional read-aloud support for the labels, charts, and graphs, accommodated text-to-speech may also be an option. Refer to the [Student Readiness Tools](#) page to hear examples of both types of text-to-speech (PearsonAccess Next > Preparing for Testing > Student Readiness Tools).

Note that because this accommodation requires the student to move from an online test to a paper test, the student loses the benefits of online testing, including interactive test items and an adaptive test tailored to their skill level.

Notes for administration: The script is the only source Test Monitors may use to read the test to the student. Reading any test content from the test book is not allowed and will require the test to be invalidated. In addition, a security violation must be reported through Assessment Security Records (ASR) if the test is read from any other source. The [Guidance for Universal Supports and Accommodations for Minnesota Statewide Assessments](#) includes detailed administration instructions for staff (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > District Resources).

Test Monitors must complete the required trainings in the *MCA Test Monitor* learning path prior to test administration.

Since the student is testing in a paper test book, district staff must enter all student responses online within the testing window in order for the test to be scored. Refer to *Entering Student Responses Online for MCA Paper Accommodations* earlier in this chapter.

Notes:

- Accommodated text-to-speech (MC) and script (MS) cannot be used together.
- If a student’s IEP or 504 plan indicates MS and either 12 or HC (handheld calculator or mathematics manipulatives/tables/abacus), only the MS code is indicated; a 12-point test book and a script are automatically sent when the script is indicated by Jan. 19. However, large print or braille test book codes must be indicated separately.
- If a student’s IEP or 504 plan indicates 12, MS, and HC, only the MS code is indicated in Pretest Editing; a 12-point test book and a script are automatically sent when the script is indicated by Jan. 19.
- With all paper mathematics test books, it is automatically assumed that a handheld calculator will be needed.

SCRIPT (SCIENCE)

Code: MS

Allowed for: Science MCA

Description: The Test Monitor reads from the script while the student responds directly into the online test or the paper test book (if required). The script is for use by the Test Monitor only.

For Science MCA, the script can be used in conjunction with the online test because the test is not adaptive; it can also be administered with a paper test book (regular print, large print, or braille test book).

When to select: This accommodation may be beneficial for a student with reading-related disabilities, or by a student who is blind and does not yet have adequate braille skills. If not used regularly during instruction and/or the student does not know the content that the items are assessing, this accommodation is likely to be confusing and may impede the performance on assessments.

The script requires that Test Monitors read all the text for labels, graphs, and charts, which may be beneficial only for a limited number of students—for example, those who may require language or visual processing supports. Cognitive overload may occur if a student is presented with too much visual and aural information simultaneously, resulting in the student being unable to process the information.

If the IEP or 504 plan requires read-aloud support, consider if the student needs this support from a human reader or if the standard text-to-speech available in the online test can provide it; if the student needs the additional read-aloud support for the labels, charts, and graphs, accommodated text-to-speech may also be an option. Refer to the [Student Readiness Tools](#) page to hear examples of both types of text-to-speech (PearsonAccess Next > Preparing for Testing > Student Readiness Tools).

Notes for administration: The script is the only source Test Monitors may use to read the test to the student. Reading any test content from the test book is not allowed and will require the test to be invalidated. In addition, a security violation must be reported through Assessment Security Records (ASR) if the test is read from any other source. The [Guidance for Universal Supports and Accommodations for Minnesota Statewide Assessments](#) includes detailed administration instructions for staff (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > District Resources).

Test Monitors must complete the required trainings in the *MCA Test Monitor* learning path prior to test administration.

The script is divided into two sections (online and paper), and the applicable section is read aloud based on how the student is testing. Use the tabs on the pages of the script to confirm the correct script is being used.

- For administration of the script in conjunction with the online test, the Test Monitor reads from the script while the student enters responses directly into the online test. **INFO!** The MS code must be indicated to ensure the correct test is assigned; if not, the student’s online test will not match the script.
- For administration of the script with regular print, large print, or braille test books, the student enters responses into the test book. Refer to the braille test book accommodation above for alternate ways for the student to respond (for example, a scribe or braille writer). Since the student is testing in a paper test book, district staff must enter all student responses online within the testing window in order for the test to be scored. Refer to *Entering Student Responses Online for MCA Paper Accommodations* earlier in this chapter.

Notes:

- Accommodated text-to-speech (MC) and script (MS) cannot be used together.
- The script will be automatically shipped if this code is indicated in Pretest Editing by Jan. 19. Paper test book codes must be indicated separately if the student will be testing using a paper test book.
- After Jan. 19, the script and test book (if the student is not testing online) must be ordered as additional orders in PearsonAccess Next.

SCRIPT (SIGNED INTERPRETATION OF MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE SCRIPTS)

Code: MS and OA (Note: If a paper test book will be used for Science MCA, the applicable code must also be indicated.)

Allowed for: Mathematics MCA and Science MCA

Description: Signed interpretation (ASL or signed English) of the Mathematics MCA and Science MCA script may be provided for deaf or hard-of-hearing students who will be using the script accommodation. The script must be used by the interpreter for the signed interpretation in conjunction with the corresponding paper test book or online test during administration.

There is also an option for the interpreter to provide the content directly from the text-to-speech in the student’s online test (mathematics or science), if this is typically how the interpretation is provided in instruction. Contact mde.testing@state.mn.us for approval of using this option and for additional instructions.

When to select: This support is provided for a student who typically accesses instruction through signed interpretation and requires the script accommodation, as determined by the IEP or 504 plan team.

Notes for administration: The interpretation must strictly adhere to the literal meaning of the text in the script. The interpreter must review the script prior to administration to determine when a sign or signs will give away the answer to items. In cases where signs give clues to the answer, interpreters must use fingerspelling for those words. The [Guidance for Universal Supports and Accommodations for Minnesota Statewide Assessments](#) includes detailed administration instructions for staff, including the linguistic rules and conventions of ASL and

details on how to interpret specific academic terms for the math and science tests (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > District Resources).

To prepare for testing, the interpreter should be provided access to the script up to 5 business days prior to the scheduled test administration. During this preparation time, interpreters must keep test materials secure. All interpreters must complete the *Test Security Training* prior to accessing test materials, and the use of an interpreter, including the name of the person interpreting, must be documented on the *Test Administration Report* (TAR).

- If the interpreter is not a district employee (for example, employed by a region service cooperative), they must provide a record of their completed training. During test administration, they must be accompanied by a Test Monitor who is employed by the district and has completed all necessary training.
- If the interpreter is a district employee and also the Test Monitor, they must complete the required trainings in the *MCA Test Monitor* learning path, not just the *Test Security Training*, prior to accessing the test materials.

Accommodations—Embedded in Test

ACCOMMODATED TEXT-TO-SPEECH FOR MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

Code: MC

Allowed for: Mathematics MCA and Science MCA

Description: Accommodated text-to-speech provides computer-generated audio for charts and graphs in addition to the audio that is provided for standard text-to-speech; the student can select the parts of the item they want to listen to.

When to select: Each individual student’s needs must be taken into account when determining which version of text-to-speech will be the most beneficial for them. This accommodation may be beneficial, for example, for a student who is blind and does not yet have adequate braille skills. If not used regularly during instruction and/or the student does not know the content that the items are assessing, this accommodation is likely to be confusing and may impede the performance on assessments.

Because accommodated text-to-speech also provides audio for all the labels, graphs, and charts, it may be beneficial only for a limited number of students—for example, those who may require language or visual processing supports. Cognitive overload may occur if a student is presented with too much visual and aural information simultaneously, resulting in the student being unable to process the information.

The default for most students should be the standard text-to-speech, which is available as a universal support on the Mathematics MCA and Science MCA. Refer to the [Student Readiness Tools](#) page to hear examples of both types of text-to-speech (PearsonAccess Next > Preparing for Testing > Student Readiness Tools).

Notes for administration:

- Accommodated text-to-speech (MC) and script (MS) cannot be used together.
- MC is not available with paper test books (12, 18, 24, BC, or BU).

Chapter 5 — Responsible and Ethical Practices to Maintain Test Security and Test Score Integrity

Overview

This chapter discusses the responsible and ethical practices used when administering and interpreting the results from Minnesota’s statewide assessments, which are critical for maintaining test security and test score integrity. These practices apply to anyone involved with any aspect of test administration or test results.

Under Minnesota Statutes, section 120B, and per federal requirements that arise from Peer Review (ESSA Section 111(a)(4), 111(b)(2)(B)(iii)-(iv), and CFR 200.2(b)(4) and (5)), MDE is responsible for maintaining the security and integrity of Minnesota’s statewide assessments. MDE develops many policies based on these federal requirements, as well as adapting information from general principles of test use set forth in the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (developed jointly by the American Educational Research Association [AERA], the American Psychological Association [APA], and the National Council on Measurement in Education [NCME] [2014]) and in the *Code of Professional Responsibilities in Educational Measurement* by the National Council on Measurement in Education (1995).

A primary goal of Minnesota’s statewide assessments is to be able to make valid inferences about student learning of the WIDA English Language Development Standards and the Minnesota Academic Standards. The principles discussed in this chapter provide guidance for determining whether a practice related to the administration of statewide assessments or use of statewide assessment results supports this goal.

- **Part I** provides the general principles of responsible assessment practice. These requirements are the professional standards to which all those involved in the assessment process are to refer to when determining what practices are appropriate and what practices are unprofessional, unethical, and/or inappropriate. More details related to data practices and use of results are provided in Chapter 11.
- **Part II** has specific examples of ethical and unethical practices in the administration of statewide assessments.
- **Part III** has specific examples of appropriate and inappropriate uses and interpretations of statewide assessment results. More details are provided in Chapter 11.
- **Part IV** addresses test security for statewide assessments. Although test security is addressed throughout this manual, this section concentrates on the importance of test security, the process for reporting security violations, and the security documentation required.
- **Part V** addresses monitoring and auditing processes required and used by MDE.

In addition to this *Procedures Manual*, policies and procedures related to responsible and ethical test administration are specified in the *Test Security Training* and other resources and guides provided for test administration.

Part I: General Principles of Professionally Responsible Practice

When considering administration of statewide assessments and interpretation or use of assessment results, each district shall use the following standards for determining which practices are appropriate and which practices are unprofessional, unethical, or inappropriate.

Because of the complex nature of standardized assessments, any practice not specifically permitted in this manual should be presumed inappropriate until and unless specifically authorized by MDE. Districts should submit questions to mde.testing@state.mn.us.

All districts and school individuals who are involved in any aspect of testing must:

- Maintain security of the test materials and test content before, during, and after the administration of the assessment.
- Avoid any actions or conditions in the preparation, administration, submission, and return of a test or test materials that might invalidate the results.
- Protect the rights of all students to privacy and due process.
- Avoid actions or conditions that would permit or encourage individual students or groups of students to receive scores that misrepresent their actual levels of achievement.

Those who are involved with test administration must:

- Thoroughly review any other applicable resources and guides prior to testing, and understand the procedures needed to administer the assessments and maintain test security and test score integrity.
- Ensure that all students enrolled in a grade in which assessments are given participate in the appropriate assessment.
- Identify the need for, provide, and document the use of universal supports and/or accommodations for each eligible student.
- Prepare students for testing and provide reasonable opportunities for students to ask questions about assessment procedures or directions prior to assessment administration.

Those who interpret, use, and communicate assessment results must:

- Avoid making, and actively discourage others from making, inaccurate reports, unsubstantiated claims, inappropriate interpretations, or other false or misleading statements that can lead to false or misleading conclusions about assessment results.
- Avoid any practice that provides an interpretation or suggests uses of assessment results that are in conflict with the purpose(s) of the assessment, limitations of the assessment, irregularities in administering the assessment, or other factors affecting the results.
- Communicate assessment results in an understandable manner to community partners, including providing proper interpretations and clarification of likely misinterpretations. These communications should provide context for statewide assessment results, which should be interpreted along with other available data from the district, school, or classroom.

- Avoid any practice that supports or leads others to interpret or use assessment results in unethical or inappropriate ways.
- Avoid any practice that permits staff without the necessary knowledge and training to interpret assessment results.
- Report any apparent misuse of assessment results to those responsible for the assessment process in the school, district, and state.
- Avoid any practice that puts personally identifiable or other private information at risk or violates confidentiality.
- Consider how to share student results in a way that serves the needs of the students while also protecting their rights and privacy.
- Abide by the embargo requirements when accessing or sharing preliminary or final assessment results before results are released publicly.
- Use multiple data points about individuals or programs whenever possible when making decisions.

Part II: Practices in Preparation and Administration of Statewide Assessments

The examples of ethical and unethical practices below illustrate the standards and principles of professionally responsible practices in the administration of statewide assessments. An unethical assessment practice is anything that would jeopardize test score integrity or student learning.

Ethical Behavior and Practice for Statewide Assessments

Preparation

- Prepare students to participate in Minnesota’s statewide assessments by aligning curriculum and instruction to the WIDA English Language Development Standards and the Minnesota Academic Standards. Since the assessments are aligned to these standards, the best preparation is providing instruction aligned to the depth and breadth of the standards, and implementing multiple formative checks of student understanding.
- Make changes in instruction that enhance student skills, learning, and achievement.
- Determine which student resources will be used to prepare students for testing. This decision may vary by school, grade, or student, as well as based on students’ familiarity and experience with testing. The district may determine that no student resources are required.
- Encourage parents/guardians and teachers to motivate students to do their best on the assessment.
- Ensure students understand their role in maintaining security of test content and the expectations that they will act with honesty and integrity during test administration.
- Set and post a testing calendar within the state-designated testing window that provides sufficient time for students to complete the assessments, including planning for makeup days.

- Consider communicating information to students and families about the use and value of assessment results in the school and district.

Administration

- Everyone involved in test administration in the district is expected to:
 - Complete MDE required trainings and any district-required trainings, based on their role in test administration, prior to the administration of the applicable assessment.
 - Be knowledgeable about state- and district-specific policies and procedures for test administration.
 - Promptly report any violations of the prescribed administration conditions, including test security violations, to the appropriate administrator at the school or to the District Assessment Coordinator (DAC).
 - Follow the district-determined testing calendar, provided it does not conflict with the state testing windows.
 - Administer all tests in strict accordance with the instructions contained in this *Procedures Manual*, as well as in other applicable resources and guides.
 - Follow security policies and procedures for distributing and returning secure test materials, accounting for all secure test materials before, during, and after testing.
- District and School Assessment Coordinators are expected to:
 - Provide adequate and appropriate staffing of testing rooms, ensuring all staff present in testing rooms have completed required trainings each school year prior to the administration of the applicable assessment.
 - Ensure every student enrolled in a grade in which assessments are given participates in the appropriate assessment, or verify documentation is completed for students who are not testing (meaning, supporting documentation is completed and/or test codes are indicated).
 - Confirm which students should be provided universal supports and/or accommodations, in conjunction with School Assessment Coordinators and Special Education and/or English learner staff.
 - Account for all secure test materials, and store them in a locked, secure location throughout the testing process when not being used for administration.
 - Return all used and unused secure test materials to the service provider as specified in the applicable instructions, and report any missing test materials to the service provider.
 - Promptly report any test security violations to MDE.
- ACCESS Test Administrators and MCA Test Monitors are expected to:
 - Provide students the opportunity to demonstrate what they know independently, without any unauthorized support, guidance, or interference during test administration.
 - Verify that the correct test and universal supports and/or accommodations are provided to students.

- Make sure all procedures related to allowable and prohibited materials are followed during test administration.
- Follow all requirements outlined in the applicable directions:
 - For ACCESS, follow the *Test Administrator’s Scripts*; use only the scripted directions and guidance in those documents to assist students during test administration.
 - For the MCA, follow the applicable *Testing Directions*; use only the scripted directions and guidance in those documents to assist students during test administration.
- Actively monitor students during all test sessions:
 - Circulate frequently around the entire room to ensure students are following directions and making progress in the test.
 - Make sure students are focused only on their tests.
 - Watch for any unusual behavior or signs of cheating, such as access to prohibited devices.
 - Ensure that students who have finished their tests during the testing session are engaged in allowable activities that do not distract students still testing.
- Kindergarten ACCESS, WIDA Alternate ACCESS, and MTAS Test Administrators are expected to:
 - Administer the tasks as scripted, only reading aloud applicable portions as specified in the *Test Administrator’s Script* (for Kindergarten and WIDA Alternate ACCESS) or *Task Administration Manual* (for MTAS).
 - Be familiar with the test materials prior to test administration.
 - Score tasks solely based on student performance during the administration of the task.
 - For WIDA Alternate ACCESS and MTAS:
 - Use instructional supports, objects, and manipulatives as appropriate for a given student unless prohibited in the task script.
 - Allow the use of assistive technology devices to meet student needs.
 - Refocus and repeat information as needed.
 - For MTAS, adapt the student-facing materials as needed to meet student needs. This may include enlarging materials, incorporating texture, or providing braille versions of text and graphics. Note: The WIDA Alternate ACCESS Student Response Booklet must be scanned for scoring and therefore cannot be adapted in any way.
- Scribes must record student responses into the online test or paper test materials exactly as provided. Refer to Chapter 4 for additional information about the scribe accommodation.
- Staff entering student responses from MCA paper test books must enter student responses exactly as written before the end of the applicable testing window.
- Staff entering MTAS scores must enter data exactly as recorded during test administration and before the end of the applicable testing window.

Unethical Behavior and Practice for Statewide Assessments

Educators and any staff involved in any aspect of test administration must not engage in any of the following behaviors or practices. If MDE is made aware of educators or staff engaging in unethical behavior or practices, MDE may provide information to applicable state agencies, such as the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) or the Board of School Administrators (BOSA), or federal agencies, such as the U.S. Department of Education (ED), for follow-up.

Unethical Preparation and Administration

- Limit curricula and instruction based on the test specifications rather than develop instructional objectives based on the WIDA English Language Development Standards or Minnesota Academic Standards.
 - While test specifications for the standards-based accountability assessments provide information on the way the academic standards will be assessed and in what proportions, they should not be used as the basis of curriculum and instruction. Instead, test specifications are guides intended to provide test developers with the way each test will be constructed. They outline the essential features of the test design to provide consistency and transparency across test forms for the life of each assessment.
 - Some concepts in the Minnesota Academic Standards can only be assessed in the classroom and not on a standardized statewide assessment. That does not mean that these skills should not be taught or assessed in the classroom. Teachers need to instruct and assess their students on all of the Minnesota Academic Standards.
- Limit instruction on mathematics or science terminology based on the translated word lists for MCA. These lists are provided as a universal support that students may use during testing, as needed. While using these lists during instruction is encouraged to familiarize eligible students with these terms, the lists are not meant to be used as the basis for curriculum or instruction.
- Encourage IEP teams to base assessment decisions on anything other than student need. This includes assessing a student with WIDA Alternate ACCESS or MTAS even though the student does not meet the participation guidelines or eligibility requirements.
- Exclude students from the assessments by actively encouraging parents/guardians or students to refuse testing. This includes communication that directly discourages participation as well as activities that may indirectly discourage participation (for example, offering activities or instruction that students do not want to miss during planned test administration times).
- Restrict or deny access to allowed assessment universal supports and/or accommodations that a student uses during instruction and/or that are indicated in an IEP or 504 plan.
- Fail to provide proper training to all individuals who have any involvement in testing.

Unethical Preparation and Administration (continued)

- Allow any test materials to be left unsecured at any time at the district or schools, including but not limited to:
 - Leaving secure test materials in an unlocked location.
 - Failing to account for, return, or dispose of secure test materials as instructed.
 - Removing secure test materials from school grounds, unless permitted for specific circumstances (such as, administering a test to a homebound student or returning secure materials to the district office for return to service providers).
- Copy, reproduce, retain, or use any portion of any secure test materials in any manner inconsistent with test security policies and procedures, including but not limited to:
 - Capturing and/or sharing in any manner any secure test content before, during, or after test administration.
 - Reproducing or distributing any portions of reading passages, test items, writing prompts, or student responses from an actual assessment, either verbatim or by paraphrasing, for use in instructional planning, classroom instruction or assessment, or for any other purpose.
 - Making a copy of a test, giving students access to test content, making answer keys, or preparing a student study guide based on the items in a particular test.
 - Knowingly allowing a student to violate test security, including retaining secure test materials, making a copy of or capturing secure test content, sharing answers with other students, or sharing test content with adults and/or students in any manner.
 - Allowing a parent/guardian, community member, media member, or any other person who is not authorized by their role to see the contents of secure test materials and/or receive a copy of secure test content.
- Deviate from the prescribed administration procedures specified in this manual, as well as other applicable resources and guides, in order to assist student performance.
- Leave prohibited materials on testing room walls or student desks. Refer to *Materials Not Allowed during Testing* in Chapter 7.
- Assign testing personnel to a room where a family member or relative is being tested. Refer to *Selecting Test Administrators and Test Monitors* in Chapter 7.
- Allow students to use materials or resources that are not allowed during test administration as noted in this manual and/or in the applicable test administration resources.
- Fail to prevent students from having access to cell phones, wearable technology, or other devices at any time during test administration unless explicitly allowed as an accommodation or another approved exception.
- View or read test items for any reason except as allowed for administering an accommodation or universal support, entering student responses online, or when required for Kindergarten ACCESS, WIDA Alternate ACCESS, or MTAS.

Unethical Preparation and Administration (continued)

- Read aloud the passages, questions, and/or answer options of a reading assessment for any student, with the exception of students taking the Kindergarten ACCESS, WIDA Alternate ACCESS, or MTAS.
- Offer an opinion to a student, class, or other staff member that a question is “bad” or does not have a correct answer. Any concerns regarding test content should be sent to MDE using the process outlined in Chapter 8.
- Log in to a student’s online test for any reason, including but not limited to, viewing test content, preparing for test administration, verifying technology, or creating a “fake” student for any reason. The only exception is if the district decides that staff will log in students initially (such as, for younger students) as described in *General Test Administration Considerations* in Chapter 8.
- Review or change student responses in any manner during test administration or when entering student responses, including but not limited to:
 - Reviewing a student’s responses on an assessment.
 - Suggesting that a student reconsider an answer already given.
 - Coaching students during testing or influencing, altering, or interfering with student responses in any way, including telling/showing students the correct responses, or allowing them to discuss answers among themselves.
 - Scoring student responses in MCA paper test books before entering student responses online.
 - Transcribing or entering the essence of a student’s response rather than the exact student response when scribing or entering student responses from MCA paper test books.
 - Changing student responses in an online assessment or intentionally changing student responses from MCA paper test books or student scores for MTAS when entering them online.
- Refuse to cooperate with MDE at any point during test administration or MDE audits, monitoring, or investigations.
- Engage in any of the following as an ACCESS Test Administrator or MCA Test Monitor:
 - Failing to provide proper directions to students, as specified in the applicable directions for the assessment.
 - Leaving the room unattended or under the supervision of untrained staff at any time.
 - Allowing students to leave the room unattended during test administration without a plan to monitor students if more than one student leaves and/or multiple testing rooms are being used.
 - Engaging in behavior that is potentially distracting to test-takers.

Unethical Preparation and Administration (continued)

- Failing to actively monitor students, including:
 - Remaining in one place for more than a few minutes if unable to observe all students.
 - Engaging in any other tasks unrelated to active monitoring, such as grading papers, checking email, performing other work, or reading material unrelated to administering the test.
 - Using cell phones or other prohibited devices for purposes other than alerting others if assistance is needed.
 - Allowing students to access a cell phone or other prohibited device.
- For grades 1–3 ACCESS administrations, copying, duplicating, or retaining any portion of the secure *Test Administrator’s Scripts*; these *Test Administrator’s Scripts* contain secure materials for use only by the Test Administrator. Note: Grades 4–12 scripts are not secure.
- Engage in any of the following activities during a Kindergarten or WIDA Alternate ACCESS administration:
 - Changing the content of a task.
 - Administering the test in a language other than English.
 - For Kindergarten ACCESS, repeating Listening or Speaking tasks more than once.
 - Leading a student to the correct answer (such as using voice inflection unless underlined in the script for emphasis, placement of cards, providing explanations or incentives).
 - Providing feedback to a student that a response is correct or incorrect.
 - Using instructional supports or naming answer options when those actions are prohibited in the script.
 - Accepting a response as correct when a student’s intent is in doubt. When the Test Administrator is uncertain about a student’s intent, the instructions in the script must be followed.
 - Copying, duplicating, or retaining any portion of the *Test Administrator’s Scripts*; the *Test Administrator’s Scripts* contain secure materials for use only by the Test Administrator.
- Engage in any of the following activities during an MTAS administration:
 - Changing the content of an MTAS task.
 - Starting an MTAS task with the script for score 2.
 - Re-administering a task for a score of 3 after presenting a score 2 script.
 - Leading a student to the correct answer (such as by using voice inflection, strategically placing response option cards, providing explanations or incentives).
 - Providing feedback to a student that a response is correct or incorrect.
 - Using objects/manipulatives or naming answer options when those actions are prohibited in the script.

Unethical Preparation and Administration (continued)

- Accepting a response as correct when a student’s intent is in doubt. When the Test Administrator is uncertain about a student’s intent, the instructions in the script must be followed.
- Intentionally skipping tasks or portions of the test. All tasks must be administered and are designed to be administered in order.
- Copying, duplicating, or retaining any portion of the Task Administration Manual. While student-facing materials for MTAS can be adapted for the student as needed, the Task Administration Manuals contain secure materials for use only by the Test Administrator.
- Participate in, direct, aid, counsel, assist, encourage, or fail to report any of the acts prohibited in this section.

Incentives

Although MDE does not have a policy against monetary incentives for student participation or performance in statewide assessments, MDE discourages the practice. Statewide assessments are a measure of what the students have learned through instruction in a curriculum aligned to the applicable standards. Providing monetary incentives is not consistent with encouraging students to do their best academically for the sake of valuing education. In addition, it is important to encourage all students to participate, regardless of performance. Because statewide assessment results are used to evaluate how districts and the state are teaching the applicable standards, each student’s assessment results play an important role when deciding where resources are most needed. They are also crucial in determining where instructional changes can be made to ensure all students have access to a high quality education that is inclusive and equitable.

Other incentives may be provided at the discretion of the district. If providing incentives, basing them on participation, rather than performance, is strongly preferred. If districts choose to provide incentives only to a select group of students (such as only to high performers), the district must be able to explain the rationale to other students and parents/guardians, and districts must distribute such incentives in such a way that student privacy is protected. MDE will refer any calls received regarding the district’s policy to the DAC.

Part III: Practices in the Use and Interpretation of Statewide Assessment Results

Examples of ethical and unethical assessment practices are provided to illustrate the standards and principles of professionally responsible practices needed when using and interpreting statewide assessment results.

Ethical Behavior and Practice

- Use summary statewide assessment data as one of multiple data points to:
 - Monitor progress in learning academic English, as described by the WIDA ELD Standards.
 - Evaluate student learning of the Minnesota Academic Standards.
- Use the results of statewide assessments as only one part of a body of evidence when making educational decisions about individuals.
 - Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.30, subdivision 1a(h) allows schools and districts to use student performance on a standards-based accountability assessment as one of multiple criteria to determine grade promotion or retention.
 - In addition, schools or districts may use a high school student's performance on a standards-based accountability assessment as a percentage of the student's final grade in a course. The score of the high school assessment may also be placed on the student's transcript. Note that the statute specifically provides these provisions for high school; it is up to the district to determine if a student's score will be used for determining a final grade for students not in high school.
 - However, as final assessment results for standards-based accountability assessments are not available before final grades would be determined, preliminary test results should be used with caution as the score may change. If placing preliminary high school MCA scores on the transcript for placement purposes when applying to a Minnesota state college or university, ensure the scores are noted as preliminary; refer to Chapter 11 for more information on using scores for placement purposes.
 - Note: Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.30, subdivision 1a(h) is specific to standards-based accountability assessments. For ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, individual student scores are used to inform educational decisions on continuing EL eligibility and the amount and scope of service offered through an educational program for ELs.
- Use statewide assessment results as one piece of evidence in context with other district and school information to identify strengths and gaps in the curriculum and to improve future instruction.
- Provide teachers and counselors with information and resources they need to accurately interpret the results of statewide assessments and use in context within an array of information and data about student learning.
- Communicate the assessment results to appropriate audiences in an honest, clear, and understandable manner, which includes providing an accurate interpretation of results and explanations of common misinterpretations.

Unethical Behavior and Practice

- Assign students to assessments in order to maximize success on accountability measures, rather than optimize appropriateness of the assessment for the student.
- Base decisions, such as retention, promotion, or placement into certain programs (such as enrichment or remediation) solely on the results of statewide assessments. (Note: Results from the ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS are designed to be used for English learner reclassification and exiting decisions.)
- Knowingly use results of statewide assessments to provide a misleading picture of the district's/school's educational programs, instruction, or student population.
- Fail to report apparent misuses of assessment results to those responsible for the assessment process in the school, district, or state.
- Deliberately hide information or provide false/misleading interpretations that imply an erroneously positive (or negative) and inaccurate picture of any individual, school, or district.
- Reveal the test scores of one student to another student or to others not directly involved with the education of that student.
- Share summary data in a manner that violates district data privacy protection rules for student data (for example, sharing results that involve a small number of students that makes it possible to identify individual students based on demographic information and other factors).
- Share embargoed preliminary or final assessment results in a public forum or with individuals who should not have access to the information prior to public release.
- Use results of statewide assessments in a manner that runs counter to the purposes of the assessment.

Part IV: Test Security

Statewide assessments require the highest level of test security. Based on the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) emphasis on test security in its Peer Review requirements and recommendations by Minnesota's National Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), MDE continues to evaluate and implement policies and procedures to maintain a fair and valid assessment system. MDE's policies around test security are applicable to all statewide assessments and are based on state statute, federal rules and statutes, and best practices. The following sections describe policies and procedures districts are required to implement to maintain test security, prevent security violations, and report and document security violations when they occur.

Why Is Test Security Important?

Test security refers to policies and procedures designed to protect test content and ensure the integrity of test scores. Developing and maintaining a secure system of statewide test administration serves to:

- Preserve the security of the test content.
- Protect the significant financial investment necessary to develop a statewide assessment system.

- Maintain the integrity of the assessment results so that they may be used to evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction at the school and district levels.
- Evaluate the implementation of standards in districts and schools to ensure equity of instruction provided to students.



In everyday terms, maintaining the integrity of assessment results answers the question, “Can I trust that this assessment result allows me to draw accurate conclusions based on it?”

Administering assessments in a secure and standardized manner is critical because it ensures that the results reflect the achievement of each student, and that they can be used to interpret and use the data in appropriate ways. If test security is not maintained, the integrity of results also may be compromised, which can lead to reporting results that do not accurately represent student achievement. One of the most important consequences related to this is school and district staff making decisions about equitable curriculum and instruction based on potentially misleading results. Refer to Chapter 11 for information on appropriate uses of statewide assessments results.

Defining Security Violations Reported to MDE

A security violation is any action that jeopardizes the security of test content, gives an unfair advantage to a student or group of students, and/or jeopardizes the integrity of test results. Other violations reported to MDE include actions that violate student data privacy (during test administration and/or reporting of results) or jeopardize the release of assessment results (for example, not abiding by the embargo and releasing test results before they are made public).

A violation may be committed by various individuals and/or precipitated by a number of events. The unethical behavior and practice sections of this chapter provides some examples of security violations.

The *MDE Test Security Procedures* located in Appendix B describes MDE’s responsibility and the applicable steps to investigate and resolve all alleged security violations on a statewide basis. Refer to the *Assessment Security Records* section later in this chapter for information on reporting security violations to MDE.

Defining Secure Test Content and Secure Test Materials

Security of test content and test materials must be maintained before, during, and after the test administration.

- All content in a test is, per statute, nonpublic data, and is therefore considered secure. The Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (MGDPA) identifies test content under Minnesota Statutes, section 13.34, and also discusses criminal, civil, and administrative penalties for data violations.

- Secure test content includes, but is not limited to, reading passages and titles; science scenarios, phenomena, and titles; all components of test items in online assessments, paper test books, scripts, and any other paper test materials; and student responses.
- Student testing tickets used to sign into online tests or enter data from a paper test are secure because they provide access to tests and contain private student data. Session rosters printed from service provider systems that contain information on accessing online tests and/or student information must be kept secure as well.
- Student scratch paper (including materials that may be used as scratch paper, like paper copies of mathematics formula sheets and translated word lists) is secure once used because students may write test items on it.

Required District Test Security Procedure

Each school district must have a written district test security procedure that addresses how test security policies and procedures will be implemented. This procedure must be reviewed and updated annually, as needed, before training or resources on district-specific policies and procedures is provided. **INFO!** This procedure is kept on file at the district, and it is not required to be posted on the district website. Information from the procedure is then provided to district and school staff annually; refer to *District Policies and Procedures Training* in Chapter 7 for additional information. The prior year’s procedure should be kept on file until replaced by the current year’s version. MDE recommends that DACs save and/or share the procedure so it is accessible to others (such as if a new DAC begins).

The *District Test Security Procedure Requirements* in Appendix B contains a list of the specific topics that must be minimally addressed in the district test security procedure, including a comprehensive list of the policies and procedures that each district must determine. **NEW!** The only addition to the list is to ensure the new requirement for one Test Administrator for every 15 students for ACCESS Writing and one for every five students for ACCESS Speaking is addressed, in addition to Test Administrator/Test Monitor requirements for other tests. Refer to Chapter 7 for additional information on this new requirement.

Districts can use the sample district test security procedure template available on the [Policies and Procedures](#) page of the PearsonAccess Next website (PAN > Resources & Training > Policies and Procedures) or create their own procedure. However, MDE strongly recommends using the template in order to ensure all requirements are addressed completely. Districts that have used the template tend to receive fewer recommended changes or required actions during MDE’s review of their test security procedures.

- All statewide assessments administered in the district (MCA, MTAS, ACCESS, and WIDA Alternate ACCESS) must be reflected in the procedure. If procedures vary by assessment, this must be noted as applicable.
- If policies vary by school, districts must specify the policies by school and can include additional documentation as needed for their district. DACs may also have School Assessment Coordinators or other school staff complete the procedure for their school and return it to the DAC for documentation.
- Roles (such as DAC, principal) or individual staff member names should be included to specify who is responsible for the given tasks.

Annually, MDE will request and review copies of district test security procedures from a sampling of districts. Refer to *Monitoring and Audits* later in this chapter.

Maintaining Security of Test Content and Test Materials

Districts must follow the guidelines in this manual as well as the other resources and guides for the distribution, administration, collection, return, and/or disposal of all secure test materials to preserve the confidentiality and security of the test content.

Assessment staff must have access to a locked storage space to maintain the security of all test materials in their possession. When possible, storage areas should be accessible by a limited number of staff, and not stored in a locked room or cabinet to which many staff have access. While paper test materials should be inventoried upon arrival and can be organized prior to testing, security of the test materials must be maintained at all times.

- District and School Assessment Coordinators should keep a list of all staff who have access to secure areas, who inventory materials, and who complete the security checklists.
- Test Administrators, Test Monitors, and other school staff may not have access to secure test materials until the day tests are administered to students. There are some exceptions to this rule in the following points; however, for any of these exceptions, all test materials must be kept secure, and Test Administrators and Test Monitors must ensure that students do not have access to the test materials prior to or after administration:
 - An ACCESS Test Administrator or MCA Test Monitor administering a braille test should be provided access to the corresponding test materials up to five business days prior to the scheduled administration. The Test Administrator or Test Monitor must keep test materials secure as they prepare for testing.
 - A sign language interpreter administering an ACCESS *Test Administrator's Script*, or a Mathematics or Science MCA script, should be provided access to the script up to five business days prior to the scheduled test administration. Similarly, a sign language interpreter for Kindergarten ACCESS, WIDA Alternate ACCESS, or MTAS (if not the Test Administrator) should be provided access to the test materials up to five business days prior to the scheduled test administration. The interpreter must keep test materials secure as they prepare for testing, and they must complete all necessary test training.
 - For Kindergarten ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, Test Administrators need to have access to test materials beforehand (including the *Test Administrator's Script*) to prepare for test administration. For WIDA Alternate ACCESS, Test Administrators also need to prepare for any individual student needs (enlarging material, finding instructional supports, etc.). Similarly, Test Administrators for ACCESS Online grades 1–3 and ACCESS Paper grades 1–12 need to review the secure *Test Administrator's Scripts* to be prepared for administration. There is no designated timeframe for when Test Administrators may have access to test materials prior to testing. Once Test Administrators have these materials, however, they must keep them secure until testing time.
 - For MTAS, Test Administrators need to have access to all test materials beforehand to prepare for test administration and any individual student needs (enlarging material, finding objects/manipulatives, etc.). There is no designated timeframe for when Test Administrators may

have access to test materials prior to testing. Once Test Administrators have these materials, however, they must keep them secure until testing time.



Because individual administrations of Kindergarten ACCESS, WIDA Alternate ACCESS, and MTAS require preparation, test materials must be available to Test Administrators ahead of administration. Test Administrators must keep these materials secure when not actively preparing for testing.

- Consideration should be given to the amount of time staff may need to appropriately prepare for test administration; whenever possible, allow consecutive hours of work time. For example, it is best practice to provide interpreters three consecutive hours of preparation time rather than three one-hour preparation sessions over multiple days.
- During test administration, Test Administrators and Test Monitors are not allowed to read, review, discuss, or copy any test content (reading passages, test questions, answer options, writing prompts, or student responses) for use in instructional planning, classroom instruction or assessments, or for any other purpose.
- Students are not allowed to disclose or discuss test items or answer options after test administration.
 - Each district determines their policy on whether staff can discuss the test administration experience with students. If the test administration experience is discussed, district staff cannot ask students about specific items.
 - If students ask about a specific item following testing, remind them that items are secure and not to be discussed. Refer to *What Help Can Test Administrators and Test Monitors Give to Students* in Chapter 8 for further guidance.
- No one may reproduce or copy any part of any test or script, whether written or in audio, paper, or electronic format, without authorization from MDE. Reproduction of secure test materials is a security violation and a violation of state statute and federal copyright protections. Note: Materials for WIDA Alternate ACCESS and MTAS are exceptions as they may be reproduced or copied as needed to meet individual student needs.
- No one may alter student responses during or after test administration.

All secure test materials must be returned to the service provider by the dates specified in the *Important Dates* section or securely disposed of following testing (no more than two business days after the close of the testing window) as instructed in Chapter 10 of this manual and other resources and guides.

Local newspapers or television stations occasionally run stories on statewide testing. However, media representatives cannot be allowed to photograph test books, related test materials, and computer/device screens displaying test content. Item samplers are available on service provider websites, and the media can photograph or televise those resources when communicating with the public about statewide testing.

Test Security Information for Students

MDE expects that all students will follow all state and district policies for test administration. As part of a culture of academic integrity, districts are responsible for reminding students of the importance of test security and the expectations that students will keep test content secure and act with honesty and integrity during test administration. These expectations can be communicated through routes determined by the district (for example, through student handbooks, district and school websites, or newsletters).

In addition, students view the following code of conduct information at the beginning of the MCA online test and in the MCA paper test books:

On this test, do your own best work to show what you know and can do.

- Do not accept help finding answers to test questions.
- Do not give answers to other students.
- Do not tell others what is on the test.
- There may be consequences if you do not follow directions or if you behave dishonestly.

Although agreeing to a code of conduct may not deter the small number of people who are determined to cheat, it is an effective method for communicating to students the expectations for behavior and conduct that support academic integrity.

Test Security Forms Used for Statewide Assessments

This section describes documentation that districts are required to keep for test security purposes. The duration for retention is two years, which allows districts to respond to investigations of possible test security violations for the previous and current school year (for example, a security violation discovered later needs to be reported for a prior school year, or an investigation for a security violation takes more than one year to be fully resolved). Refer to the *Document Retention Policy for Districts* in Appendix B for a list of documentation required to be kept by districts.

Test Administration Report

DACs need to develop a process for how misadministrations, special circumstances (such as documentation of some universal supports and accommodations), and reasons for invalidations will be communicated and documented in the district, as these situations are only reported to MDE if test security is violated. The *Test Administration Report (TAR)*, located in Appendix A, is used to record this information. **INFO!** The TAR has been reformatted based on district feedback to more easily document the information. Districts may create their own version of this form to more efficiently collect information from staff or schools (such as, collecting information electronically), but they must ensure that student data privacy is maintained.

Documentation on this report may help answer questions from district staff, parents/guardians, and the media about what occurred during testing when student results become available. In addition, it may be helpful for

DACs to annually review information documented on TARs to determine what situations or misadministrations have occurred commonly in the past and use this information as part of training.

Figure 6: Why the TAR Is Helpful

Why is the TAR helpful?

- Documents non-standard situations that happen during testing
- Helps you answer questions that may come up when results are available
- Provides some insight into areas where more training may be needed

The following are examples of situations that should be documented. Some are misadministrations, and some are special circumstances:

- A student is administered the incorrect assessment or universal support/accommodation.
- There is a misadministration during testing, which refers to any actions that vary from the policies and procedures specified in guides and resources (for example, Student A signs into Student B’s test).
- A student’s test is invalidated for any reason (for example, student action that affects the validity of the student’s test, or prohibited device access or use).
- The district uses a translator to translate the test directions in the *Test Administrator’s Scripts* (grades 1–12 ACCESS) or *Testing Directions* to an English learner.
- The district uses a sign language interpreter to sign the test directions in the *Test Administrator’s Scripts* or *Testing Directions* or a script to a student.

Districts may also choose to document any students who refuse to test or who experience technical issues during online testing that affect their testing experience.

Completed TARs must be kept at the district for two years after the end of the academic school year in which testing took place. If completed by the School Assessment Coordinator, the DAC should have access to the information collected at the school. **Districts do not submit TARs to MDE or service providers**, unless requested for audits or monitoring conducted by MDE.

Assessment Security Records

DACs are required to develop a process for how security violations will be communicated and documented in the district. It must include a way for staff to report information confidentially, in case they feel the need to maintain privacy. Security violations involve actions that jeopardize the integrity of test results and/or give an unfair advantage to a student or group of students.

Assessment Security Records (ASR) in Test WES is used by the DAC to report security violations to MDE. ASR allows for communication, as well as recordkeeping, between the district and MDE for test security, monitoring,

and audits. **NEW!** With the expansion of this system, ASR is replacing the Test Security Notification (TSN) terminology. To report a security violation to MDE, the DAC creates an ASR.

MDE may also request that an ASR be submitted for tracking data violations, such as a data privacy issue related to testing (including leaving student results unsecured) or not abiding by the embargo for preliminary or final assessment results.

The timeline for reporting security violations is as follows:

- When a potential security violation occurs, the DAC should **immediately** (or no later than one business day after the security violation occurs) contact the MDE statewide assessment district contact at mde.testing@state.mn.us, who will advise whether the report should be submitted.
- If an ASR is necessary, it should be submitted within two business days of the security violation, even if investigation into the incident is still taking place (additional documentation can be submitted at a later time).
 - The DAC is responsible for coordinating the collection of required documentation and uploading it in Test WES. Note that each ASR must include all documentation specific to the incident, even if similar information was provided as part of a different ASR for the district.
 - Refer to the Submitting Assessment Security Records in Test WES [help document](#) for detailed information on the documentation required and instructions for submitting ASRs (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Business and Finance > Data Submissions > Test WES).

MDE recommends each DAC check with the appropriate district personnel to find out current investigation protocol. The DAC needs to be aware of local school district rules that apply during an investigation. If an investigation requires that students be interviewed, staff should follow district guidelines regarding parent/guardian notification. Additionally, there may be situations where the DAC may need other resources to assist with completing the investigation. Guidance from MDE is included in the *Test Security Investigation Guide* in Appendix B.

Documentation related to a security violation must be kept on file for two years after the end of the academic school year in which testing took place. Because completed ASRs are available in Test WES, districts can determine whether to keep the paper versions of documentation.

When MDE receives a submitted ASR, the Test Security and Data Integrity (TSDI) team of the Academic Standards, Instruction and Assessment division reviews the incident and the documentation provided by the district.

- For the majority of cases, communication will be sent to the DAC summarizing the issue, stating what documentation was included with the submission and what still needs to be provided, as well as any additional steps that are required.
- In all cases, communication will be sent to the DAC when the ASR is closed. It is the district's responsibility to communicate any security findings to others in their organization.

- If MDE determines the incident merits a formal investigation, then MDE Assistance and Compliance staff conducts an investigation to gather more information about the alleged test security violation. Refer to *MDE Test Security Procedures* in Appendix B for more information.

Note: While all security violations must be reported to MDE, some violations may be beyond the control of a DAC. Often, security violations are the result of a miscommunication or misunderstanding and not a deliberate act to affect the validity of the results; similarly, an action by a single student or staff member cannot be prevented in all instances, even with safeguards and training in place. However, an ASR is still required in these instances to document and investigate this situation.

Having a security violation is not necessarily a reflection on the quality of your training or procedures. Security violations can happen in any district!



Security Checklists

Secure test materials contain security numbers that are used for tracking by districts and the service providers. To maintain security of test materials, districts track them from their receipt until their return using the security checklists provided. If there are any discrepancies between the security checklists and secure test materials received, notify the service provider using the contact information and instructions included in the shipment.

- **Security Checklists** provided in the test materials shipment include all secure test materials, including the security numbers assigned to each secure material. It can be used to inventory test materials upon receipt and record the name of the Test Administrator or Test Monitor who received and returned the test materials.
- The **Test Materials Assigned to Students Checklist** is provided by MDE in Appendix A of this manual and is used to document the names of students and the security number for their assigned paper test materials. It can also be used to document secure materials that may be used for multiple students (such as a mathematics or science script). **INFO!** The checklist has been reformatted based on district feedback to more easily document the information. The school makes a copy for its files and sends the original to the DAC once testing is completed. For MCA and MTAS, districts may also create their own checklist from the files provided in PearsonAccess Next; refer to *Tracking Secure Test Materials Provided to Students* in Chapter 8.

Security checklists must be kept on file for two years after the end of the academic school year in which testing took place. Do not return the checklists to service providers or MDE, unless requested.

Refer to *Missing Secure Test Materials* in Chapter 10 for information on actions required if secure test materials are missing at any point while in the possession of the district or school (whether identified at the district/school or by the service provider after materials are returned).

Test Security Tip Line

Educators, families, students, and others can report suspected incidents of cheating or other improper or unethical behavior on statewide assessments to MDE; these reports can be made by using the online Test Security Tip Line, sending an email, or calling MDE. Depending upon the nature of each report and the amount of information provided, MDE will follow up first with the submitter to gather further information; it is helpful for the submitter to include their name and contact information for this purpose only. The submitter may still choose to remain anonymous, even if contact information is provided, and the submitter's identity will remain non-public at all times.

Links to the Test Security Tip Line are available on the Statewide Testing sections of the MDE website:

- View the Districts, Schools, and Educators [Statewide Testing page](#) of the MDE website (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing).
- View the Students and Families [Student Participation page](#) of the MDE website (MDE > Students and Families > Programs and Initiatives > Statewide Testing > Student Participation).

To submit a report via email, email mde.testing@state.mn.us.

MDE takes test security practices and policies very seriously and encourages any individual with firsthand knowledge of a test security concern to contact MDE. Before doing so, however, individuals are encouraged to first raise their concerns about test security with their DAC or the district's administration or legal counsel.

Districts must inform staff about the MDE Test Security Tip Line and other contact information so that staff are aware of their options to report security concerns. The district will determine how information on reporting security concerns or incidents is provided to staff (for example, staff handbook, district training, staff websites, or newsletters). The tip line is available on the Students and Families page of the MDE website, and districts may refer individuals to it as needed; however, districts are not required to provide specific notification of it to students and families.

Note: Minnesota Statute requires MDE to provide a way for the public to review and report online testing disruptions that have occurred, such as a technical issue that impacted testing. The Testing Disruptions Tracking System is available on the Statewide Testing sections of the MDE website along with the tip line. Districts and schools should NOT use the system to seek assistance for resolving issues; instead, districts and schools must contact the appropriate service provider directly when needing time-sensitive assistance with technical issues impacting testing.

Part V: Monitoring and Audits

Monitoring and audits are an important part of verifying administration practices in districts and schools. These checks provide a feedback loop for improving MDE's trainings and resources, as well as districts' administration of statewide assessments. The ultimate goal of MDE monitoring and audits is to ensure the validity of student results. Appendix C contains the related documents and checklists for monitoring and audits. Documentation that districts are required to retain related to statewide testing are listed in the *Document Retention Policy for Districts* in Appendix B and reflected throughout this manual. Note: MDE may request that districts provide any documentation specified in that list as part of monitoring or audits.

District Monitoring of Test Administration

MDE requires District and School Assessment Coordinators (or any of their designated, trained staff) to conduct random, unannounced observations of testing rooms to confirm adherence to state and district policies and procedures by Test Administrators, Test Monitors, and other staff. This requirement applies to both ACCESS and MCA administrations. Similar observations can be conducted for other aspects of test administration, like inventorying and organizing secure test materials, distributing test materials on the day of testing, and preparing technology for online testing. **INFO!** Districts can use the *Minnesota Statewide Assessments Monitoring List* in Appendix C, or develop their own list as long as it includes all of the components provided in Appendix C. It is up to the district to determine how many schools and testing rooms to observe.



Districts must conduct monitoring visits within their district for both ACCESS and MCA administrations.

Monitoring of individual administrations (Kindergarten ACCESS, WIDA Alternate ACCESS, and MTAS) is not required, but districts may include them in applicable portions of their monitoring, if desired.

District Inter-Rater Reliability Monitoring for ACCESS Paper Grades 1–12 Speaking Tests

Students who take the ACCESS Paper grades 1–12 Speaking test have their spoken responses scored by the Test Administrator. As a result, districts must develop a process for documenting training and inter-rater reliability for the Speaking test to ensure that all raters interpret students' spoken language consistently and fairly. Inter-rater reliability refers to the consistency of scores awarded to a student by multiple raters (Test Administrators).

MDE requires that at least 10 percent of Speaking tests be monitored for inter-rater reliability. In cases where fewer than 10 students take the paper Speaking test at any given school, at least one test should be scored by a second rater at each school. The second rater is not required to be a licensed teacher, but they must complete all training requirements for administering the paper Speaking test (refer to Chapter 7 for details). If a second rater is not available during the administration, the administration may be recorded so the second rater may listen to it at another time. Note: Because this recording is secure test content, it must be kept secure and destroyed following the second rating.

If the two raters do not assign the same score, districts may determine their method for assigning the score the student will receive:

- Districts may submit the primary rater's score as the score of record, whether or not a second rater is in agreement with that score.
- Districts may submit a score that two or more raters agree upon following discussion and reexamination of the rating criteria.

There are three resources that provide further information: *Maintaining Rater Reliability in Scoring the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 Paper Speaking Test*, *Rater Reliability Calculator—ACCESS Paper Speaking*, and *Using the Rater*

Reliability Calculator, which are posted to the [WIDA Minnesota page](#) (WIDA > Minnesota [under Members/States dropdown at the top of the page]).

Districts must keep documentation of this monitoring for one year following the academic school year in which testing took place.

MDE Review of District Test Security Procedures

Annually, MDE will request and review copies of district test security procedures from a sampling of districts, as detailed in *Required District Test Security Procedure* earlier in this chapter. The rubric MDE uses to evaluate these procedures is included in Appendix C. In addition to the procedures specified in the requirements, MDE verifies district testing calendars during this review. After the review process, MDE will provide feedback through ASR to the DAC about the district's test security procedure, including any recommended changes or required actions.

MDE Review of Training Documentation

Annually, MDE will request and review training documentation from a sampling of the schools selected for an ACCESS or MCA monitoring visit. These schools will be identified by MDE prior to the monitoring visits, but the request for training documentation will be included in the follow-up letter sent to the DAC after the monitoring visit.

The rubric that MDE will use to evaluate training documentation is included in Appendix C. In order to confirm that staff completed the correct trainings, information that identifies staff members by role will need to be provided along with the training documentation. The role listed needs to identify each staff member's test administration role (for example, Test Monitor, technology staff, access to secure materials, assisting in testing room), not their job title (for example, teacher, counselor). Refer to *Training Documentation* in Chapter 7 for detailed information.

After receiving the training documentation, MDE will provide feedback through ASR to the DAC about the documentation and training process, including any recommended changes or required actions.

MDE Review of Medical Excuse Documentation

Annually, MDE will request copies of the documentation kept when the Medical Excuse (ME) test code is indicated (the documentation provided by a licensed medical professional indicating why the student could not test).

This review is conducted on a random sample of schools, and it examines the decision-making process the district used to indicate the ME test code and the supporting documentation. Refer to Chapter 9 for ME test code criteria. In order to confirm that the rationale used for determining whether to use the ME test code was appropriate, information about the process will need to be provided along with all related documentation. The rubric MDE will use to evaluate ME documentation is included in Appendix C.

Note: This documentation, when retained by the school district, is considered an educational record under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (45 C.F.R. 160.103 (2)(i)(ii); 20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 C.F.R.

Part 99) and is classified as private data per federal and state law. As such, MDE may review the documentation to ensure all privacy requirements are met.

After receiving the documentation, MDE will provide feedback through ASR to the DAC regarding the medical excuse documentation and process followed within the district.

MDE Site Visits

MDE conducts site visits throughout the year for various purposes. All forms of site visits are done based upon the overall MDE goals of prevention, detection, investigation, and resolution of security violations. Any topic that is reviewed or discussed during any type of monitoring visit reflects current policies, procedures, and/or requirements as discussed in this *Procedures Manual* or in other resources.

The current types of site visits include, but are not limited to, the following, which are described in more detail in this section:

- Monitoring an ACCESS test administration
- Monitoring an MCA test administration
- Auditing an MTAS test administration

Schools are expected to allow MDE to conduct site visits. Any school that refuses access to the MDE staff person or does not cooperate with requests for information will be selected for a required site visit the following year.

While a DAC cannot request that MDE visit a specific school for a monitoring visit or audit, the DAC may choose to do their own district monitoring if there is concern about a school's procedures. If there is a test security concern, the DAC could also submit an ASR (if they observe a violation during district monitoring) or a tip on the Test Security Tip Line.

MDE Monitoring of Schools for ACCESS and MCA

MDE and MDE representatives visit schools to monitor ACCESS (grades 1–12) and MCA test sessions as part of an overall strategy to improve the administration of statewide assessments and to verify that test security requirements are followed. MDE uses the information learned from these monitoring visits to clarify policies and procedures, and to develop training resources that will help districts construct uniform testing conditions across the state. A school may be chosen based upon past concerns, information known by or reported to MDE, or through random selection.

The *Minnesota Statewide Assessments Monitoring List* in Appendix C outlines the areas that MDE monitors will observe or request during site visits for either assessment. **NEW!** The only addition to the list is the requirement that there is one Test Administrator for every 15 students for ACCESS Writing. (For ACCESS Listening and Reading and MCA, all efforts should be made to have at least one Test Administrator/Test Monitor for every 30 students). Refer to Chapter 7 for additional information on this new requirement. Note: While requirements have also changed for ACCESS Speaking, it is not included on the list because Speaking is not part of site visits.

In order for MDE to observe schools on testing days, testing calendars for each grade and subject must be posted and must be kept current throughout the school year per state and federal statutes. MDE may follow up with the DAC to confirm that testing calendars are up to date. Refer to Chapter 6 for additional information about posting testing calendars.

During monitoring visits, a monitor will arrive unannounced at the school office and request to meet with the Assessment Coordinator (District or School). The monitor will stay on site until at least one test session is observed and the interview with the Assessment Coordinator has been completed; depending on the test administration schedule, they may stay on site for a full day of testing. The monitor is there only to observe, not to participate in administration of the test or to clarify MDE policies or procedures.

Note: Since the monitor may not be meeting with the DAC, it is important that the School Assessment Coordinator or a designated school-level testing contact is able to answer the interview questions and provide the documentation noted in Appendix C. For ACCESS site visits, if the administration is coordinated by EL staff, DACs should ensure that EL staff members are prepared to answer the interview questions provided in Appendix C, and/or coordinate with other school staff.



Ensure staff at the school are prepared to speak to the questions asked during a monitoring visit.

Following the monitoring visit, the DAC will receive communication from MDE through ASR. This communication will include feedback about the visit and any potential concerns raised by the monitoring visit. If there were concerns, the DAC will need to submit appropriate documentation as requested by MDE. The communication may also include recommendations from MDE and requests for training documentation, as described under *MDE Review of Training Documentation* earlier in this chapter.

MTAS Field Audits

Each year, MDE employs Field Auditors to observe MTAS administrations in selected schools. The primary purpose of MTAS field audits is to gather evidence to evaluate the validity and reliability of the assessment. Since the assessment is scored by the Test Administrator at the school site, it is critical that the Test Administrator is properly trained in MTAS administration and scoring, and is able to apply that training consistently when assessing each student. Likewise, it is critical for test score integrity that all Test Administrators are applying this training consistently across the state.

Following a proportional sampling procedure within nine regions of the state, eligible school sites are selected to ensure that audited sites reflect the distribution of MTAS administrations across the state. Additionally, school sites may be required for an audit based on any of the following:

- A previous audit found non-adjacent score discrepancies or differences in recording student responses for one or more Test Administrators. Note: A non-adjacent score occurs when the Test Administrator assigns a score to a task that differs by more than one point from the score assigned by the Field Auditor. For field test tasks, this means the Test Administrator records a student response that is different than the response recorded by the Field Auditor.
- A previous audit found one or more MTAS misadministrations.

- An audit found that the Test Administrator had not completed required trainings prior to administration.
- When selected for an audit in the previous school year, the school was excused because of a demonstrated hardship.
- When selected for an audit in the previous school year, the school refused to provide their schedule or did not respond to requests for their testing schedule in a timely manner.
- When selected for an audit in the previous school year, the school refused access to the Field Auditor or did not cooperate with appropriate requests for information during the audit.
- **NEW!** Field test tasks were not administered.
- Other concerns as identified by MDE through observation or data audit.

Note: Schools that are selected as eligible for an audit may request to be excused from the audit when the review would place a hardship on the students or staff. This request must be submitted to mde.testing@state.mn.us and demonstrate overwhelming evidence of the hardship. After review by MDE, any school that is excused because of a demonstrated hardship will be automatically selected for an audit the following year and may not request to be excused for that year.

Ahead of the testing window, MDE notifies the DAC, Superintendent, and Special Education Director of the school or schools selected for an MTAS audit within the district.

- The DAC must provide the schedule of MTAS administrations at the selected schools, following the instructions and timeline in the communication from MDE. If the DAC does not provide the schedule of MTAS administrations by the due date, the Field Auditor will contact MDE.
- Once Field Auditors receive the schedules for selected schools, they will determine which sites they will visit, prioritizing schools that have a mandated field audit.
- Field Auditors will notify DACs of the date and time of their visit, if selected, or if they will not be visiting the school.

The *MTAS Field Audit Checklist* in Appendix C outlines the areas the Field Auditors will observe and the questions they will ask Test Administrators. While observing the test administration, Field Auditors will score the tasks administered to students in order to evaluate inter-rater consistency. The Test Administrator's score stands unless a non-adjacent score or difference in recording student responses is observed. A non-adjacent score occurs when the Test Administrator assigns a score to a task that differs by more than one point from the score assigned by the Field Auditor. For example, a Test Administrator may have assigned 3 points to a student's performance on a task, where the auditor assigned 1 point. **INFO!** For field test tasks, Test Administrators will record A, B, C, or No Response (NR). The Field Auditor will also record these student responses. If the Test Administrator records a student response that is different than the response recorded by the Field Auditor, the auditor's recorded response prevails.

Following the audit, the DAC will receive communication from MDE that includes any concerns raised by the Field Auditor, and indicates if any scoring changes were required; it may also include recommendations from MDE. This communication will be sent at the end of the testing window once Field Auditors have submitted all documentation to MDE and any scoring changes (non-adjacent scores or invalidations) have been confirmed.

Chapter 6 — Overview of Test Administration

Overview

This chapter includes general information related to test administration, such as testing windows, district testing calendars, and student demographic data collection.

Important Dates

The *Important Dates* section at the beginning of this manual has a chronological list of responsibilities, arranged by assessment and date, of which District Assessment Coordinators (DACs) must be aware and follow during the current school year.

Which Assessment Students Will Take

Before test administration, districts must determine which assessments each student will take, and if applicable, which universal supports and/or accommodations students will need. Specific requirements must be followed when determining which students should be assessed with the WIDA Alternate ACCESS or MTAS; refer to Chapter 2 for details. Information about universal supports and accommodations is outlined in Chapter 4.

The decision regarding which assessment to administer must be made before a student starts any assessment for the year.

- If the incorrect assessment is administered due to a misadministration (for example, the student was supposed to take MTAS but the Test Monitor administered the MCA), the correct assessment should be administered to the student. If the misadministration is discovered after the testing window has closed, contact MDE at mde.testing@state.mn.us for next steps.
- Students must take the assessment indicated in their IEP or 504 plan (if applicable). If a student begins testing and the district thinks the incorrect decision was made for which assessment and/or which mode (online or paper) to administer, the specific assessment determines what actions can be taken:
 - For ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS, the student must finish the test they started. The district can reevaluate for next year.
 - For MCA/MTAS, the student cannot take another test for that specific subject, and the subject that was started may either be finished or scored as is. The decision regarding which assessment to administer for any remaining subjects can be reconsidered only in conjunction with the IEP or 504 plan team.
- If a student changes school districts, and the new district determines a different assessment is appropriate, the new district should administer the assessment documented in the student's current IEP or 504 plan.

Note: If multiple test records are received for a student, the most accommodated test becomes the test reported (for example, MTAS is used instead of MCA).

Establishment of Testing Windows

Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.30 charges MDE with establishing a uniform testing calendar each year. Testing calendars are posted on the Districts, Schools and Educators [Statewide Testing](#) page of the MDE website (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing (under the Testing Calendars expandable heading)). Each district then sets their own testing calendar within the state-designated testing windows. Several factors are evaluated when establishing a testing window, including test security and the impact on scoring, reporting, and accountability calculation timelines. MDE keeps the testing windows open as long as possible to allow the most scheduling flexibility for districts and to allow students to test as close to the end of the school year as possible, while also balancing test security and the timelines for reporting data.

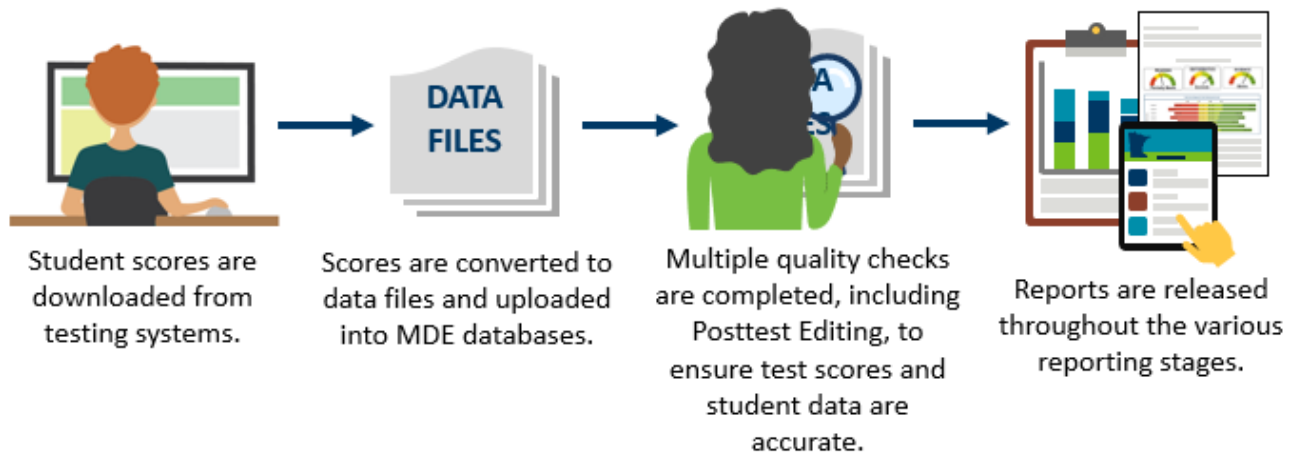
MDE determines the testing windows based on the following:

- The testing window for the English language proficiency accountability assessments (ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS) is scheduled before the testing windows for the standards-based accountability assessments (MCA/MTAS) to ensure districts have sufficient time and resources to administer all statewide assessments.
 - With this schedule, there are only a few weeks where the windows overlap, minimizing the impact on students, staff, and the capacity to administer online tests.
 - For consistency from year to year, the testing windows follow the same relative dates. Every six years, however, the testing windows need to be adjusted to prevent them from continually shifting earlier into the year. The MCA/MTAS testing window was last adjusted in 2020–21. For ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS, the last testing window adjustment was in 2021–22.
- For the standards-based accountability assessments (MCA/MTAS), the testing windows vary by subject and test for the following reasons:
 - The Science MCA testing window can be one week longer than the Reading and Mathematics MCA testing window, since additional time is needed by MDE and the service provider to prepare the reading and mathematics data for scoring and quality control procedures before Posttest Editing. The Science MCA is taken in only three grades, and less time is needed for those procedures once the testing window ends.
 - The testing window for all three subjects of MTAS ends at the same time because the test is administered to students individually and the subjects are more likely to be administered together. In addition, the MTAS testing window must end at the same time as the Reading and Mathematics MCA testing window so that the data will be available for Posttest Editing.
- MDE provides a Posttest Editing window after all testing windows have closed in order for districts to ensure the most accurate information is reflected on final reports. This window allows districts the opportunity to verify that all students who were expected to test have a test record connected to their enrollment record. The standards-based accountability assessments testing windows need to end early enough in May so the data are available for Posttest Editing while district staff—especially staff contracted only during the school year—are available to make the edits.
- Final data are available to districts in the summer. This allows districts time to review their data for use in curriculum and instructional decision-making for the following year. Note: An exception to this

timeline is after the first operational administration of a new series of assessments, when standard setting must occur. “Standard setting” is the process by which performance level expectations are set after this initial administration; refer to *Building a Test* in Appendix B for additional information.

NEW! Standard setting will take place in 2023–24 following the administration of the WIDA Alternate ACCESS.

Figure 7: Steps Before MDE Provides Final Results



Extension of Testing Windows

MDE expects districts to schedule test administrations early enough in the testing window to ensure all students have the opportunity to complete testing and for data entry to be completed in time for applicable assessments. Administering assessments earlier in the testing window allows for the final week(s) to be used for makeup testing and data entry, as needed. To ensure a smooth online testing experience, MDE expects districts to follow all recommended steps and procedures for online testing preparation at each of their sites prior to test administration. The length of the testing window and the flexibility each district has in determining their testing calendar mitigates the need for MDE to extend the testing window; requests to do so for individual students, schools, or districts will not be granted. This also includes requests from schools or districts that experience adverse weather conditions or technical difficulties at the local level that may interrupt testing.

- Districts that elect to schedule assessments on the last week of the testing window must have a contingency plan (such as an alternative site or scheduling testing after hours to ensure all students have the opportunity to complete testing) should they experience technical issues in a building.
- If the state were to experience a systemic failure of a test due to widespread issues, such as service provider delivery failure affecting the entire state, MDE may consider extending the testing window at its sole discretion. Such rare extensions could affect the dates for other events that occur after the testing window, such as Posttest Editing or timing the release of test results.

District Testing Calendar

To increase transparency on assessments, both state legislation (Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.301, subdivision (c)) and ESSA (ESSA Section 1006 (e)(2)(b)) have requirements for a comprehensive district testing

calendar. Districts must post testing calendar information (listed below) on the district website and update it in a timely manner when any changes occur; each district decides which staff member(s) are responsible for determining and updating the testing calendar. This information may also be posted on individual school website(s), if the district chooses, in addition to the district website. **NEW!** The testing calendar must be posted by districts at least one week prior to any eligible assessments being administered but no later than Oct. 1.

Districts choose how to provide the information (for example, as separate links or documents) and its format (for example, in a chart or calendar format). While it is acceptable to provide links to the information, rather than including all of the information in one location on the district website, districts need to ensure the information is publicly available and as accessible as possible. This is especially important for test administration dates. For example, the test administration dates for each school can be directly posted on the district’s website with the other testing calendar information, or links to the location of testing dates on each school’s website could be provided. Examples of what a testing calendar can look like are found in Appendix B.

On the testing calendar, districts must:

- Provide information about all assessments administered, which includes both statewide assessments and any local assessments given. Schools and districts determine what constitutes a local districtwide assessment; generally, if most students within a grade are being given the same assessment, it would be included on the testing calendar.
- Provide the subject/domain for each assessment.
- Provide the purpose for which each assessment is used. The rationale for administering the assessment and the source of the requirement must also be included. Sample information for statewide assessments is provided in Table 7. Districts may develop their own language or adapt this language as needed.

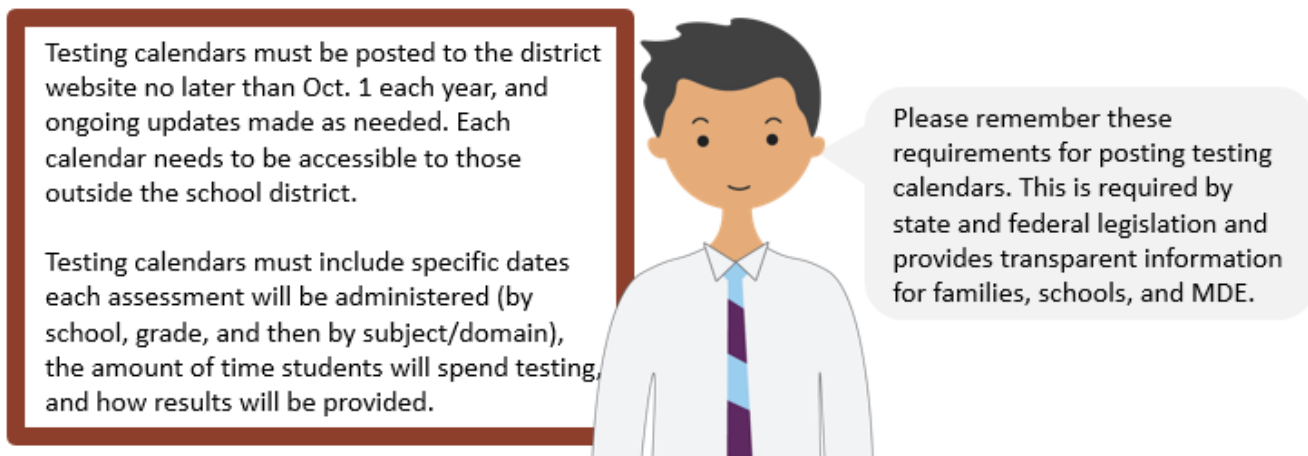
Table 7. Examples of Purposes and Rationales of Statewide Assessments

| Assessment | Purpose | Rationale | Source of the Requirement |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| MCA and MTAS | To measure learning of the Minnesota Academic Standards | Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.30 and ESSA | Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.30 ESSA |
| ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS | To measure progress toward meeting the WIDA English Language Development Standards | ESSA | ESSA |
| College Entrance Exams (ACT and/or SAT) | To provide Minnesota students information related to career and college readiness | Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.30 | Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.30 |

- Include the amount of time students will spend taking the assessment. For statewide assessments, MDE recommends using the estimated test administration times provided in Chapter 7. Since each year’s updated version of the *Procedures Manual* is not available in time to inform the posting of the district testing calendar, districts should use the information from the most recent version of the *Procedures Manual* and adjust as needed once the updated manual is posted if needed.
 - While not a requirement, districts may consider including information about the amount of time spent in their district on ensuring students are familiar with the test they will take and test administration, as well as how much overall instructional time is spent on testing. This information can help put the actual amount of time spent on testing in perspective for parents/guardians and other stakeholders.
 - For local district/school assessments, include information about how the district/school assessments fit within the requirements of local testing time limitations (refer to Chapter 2).
- Post the specific dates when most students will be testing for each grade and subject at each school within the district; for grades 1–12 ACCESS, this includes specifying by domain. Note: The actual test administration dates must be posted, not just the dates of the state-designated testing window.
 - Specific dates must be indicated for each domain of grades 1–12 ACCESS, even if there is only one, or very few, English learners in the school.
 - For assessments that are individually administered (Kindergarten ACCESS, WIDA Alternate ACCESS, and MTAS), the specific range of dates each assessment will be administered within the state-designated testing window must be indicated.
 - In the fall, districts may include their best estimates for test administration if specific dates have not yet been finalized. Specific testing schedules by grade and subject must be updated as changes are identified.
- Include the timeline and format for disseminating assessment results.
 - Depending on the district’s process for providing final assessment results, this could include a link to the [Minnesota Report Card](#) section of the MDE website (MDE > Data Center > Minnesota Report Card) for school and district results, or information on how results are provided through the district’s student/family portal.
 - Information about how Individual Student Reports (ISRs) are provided must be included.
 - If the district provides preliminary results from a service provider’s system, this process should be included as well.
 - In the fall, the general process for disseminating results may be included even if reporting dates have not yet been provided by MDE. Once provided by MDE, specific reporting dates can be added. **NEW!** Due to 2023–24 being the first operational administration of the updated WIDA Alternate ACCESS, reporting will be delayed. MDE recommends that districts indicate that results for this assessment will be disseminated in the fall of 2024.
 - Districts may check the previous year’s district test security procedures to see how assessment results have been disseminated in the past.

Specific testing schedules must be updated no later than two months before the applicable testing window. MDE reviews testing calendars and will communicate directly with the DAC if MDE determines that the testing calendar is not available or is incomplete.

Figure 8: District Testing Calendar Requirements



Testing calendars must be posted to the district website no later than Oct. 1 each year, and ongoing updates made as needed. Each calendar needs to be accessible to those outside the school district.

Testing calendars must include specific dates each assessment will be administered (by school, grade, and then by subject/domain), the amount of time students will spend testing, and how results will be provided.

Please remember these requirements for posting testing calendars. This is required by state and federal legislation and provides transparent information for families, schools, and MDE.

Technology Preparation

To ensure that districts are prepared to administer online assessments, District Technology Coordinators and DACs must collaborate to ensure they have taken the necessary steps to prepare devices for online testing.

For ACCESS, the WIDA Assessment Management System (WIDA AMS) is the website where district and school users sign in to manage test sessions for online testing. Online tests are delivered to students using the DRC INSIGHT Secure Application. Technology Coordinators can find an overview of ACCESS technology requirements on the [Technology](#) page of the WIDA website (WIDA > Assess > Technology). A number of important resources for Technology Coordinators are also available on the [WIDA AMS](#) website. On the login page, select the link for “WIDA AMS Library” to visit the Training Materials page. Next, select the button labeled “Show Documents” to access downloadable resources. These include the *Technology User Guide*, a *Technology Readiness Checklist*, *Tech Bulletins*, supported system requirements, training webinars, and more.

For MCA, [PearsonAccess Next](#) is the website where district and school users sign in to create and manage online test sessions. Online tests are delivered to students using the TestNav application. The *Infrastructure Readiness Checklist*, which is updated annually, outlines all steps to prepare technology infrastructure for online testing. Supported system requirements and other technology supports are available on the [Technology](#) page of the PearsonAccess Next website (PearsonAccess Next > Technology). Training webinars, which include targeted trainings for technology staff, are posted to the Learning Management System (LMS).

MDE provides timely technology reminders, updates, and resources to District Technology Coordinators and DACs throughout the school year in the *Assessment Update*. It is expected that districts will use the available resources, including service provider technology support staff, to ensure their schools are ready for online testing prior to the beginning of test administration.

Overview of Student Demographics and Data Collection

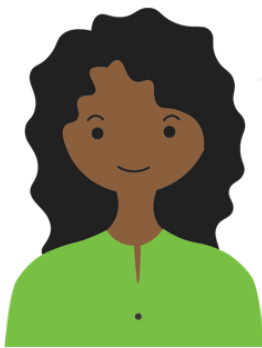
Minnesota uses student demographic data throughout the testing and reporting processes. Correct demographic data are necessary for accurate reporting, and districts and schools have opportunities to edit incorrect student data used for test administration, final reporting, and accountability calculations.

MDE requires that a particular MARSS or state student ID (SSID) number be held by just one student. MDE's [Student Identity Validation Interface](#) is used by authorized staff (often the district MARSS Coordinator) to search for known students, to validate and create MARSS/SSID numbers for new students, and to resolve student identity issues with submitted data (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Business and Finance > Data Submissions > Student ID Validations).

In an effort to help improve the collection of required educational data from Minnesota school districts, MDE has been transitioning student-level data submission to Ed-Fi technology.

- For school year 2023–24, districts must continue to dual submit their information via both the MARSS A/B files and Ed-Fi data syncs until they are certified to sync with Ed-Fi data only. Both MARSS A/B files and Ed-Fi data syncs are validated through MDE's [MARSS WES](#) system (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Business and Finance > Data Submissions > MARSS Web Edit System (WES)).
- MARSS A/B files continue to be used as the primary source of student demographics for all assessments (unless the district is Ed-Fi certified), and MARSS Coordinators can use available comparison reports to compare the data submitted through MARSS A/B files and synced with Ed-Fi.

Additional information is available on the [Ed-Fi](#) page of the MDE website (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Business and Finance > Data Submissions > Ed-Fi). For questions about Ed-Fi, contact ed-fi.mde@state.mn.us. For questions about MARSS submissions, contact marss@state.mn.us.



Collaboration with the district MARSS Coordinator is very important to make sure student data is correct.

The student demographic information used for statewide testing and reporting is pulled directly from district enrollment data submitted to MDE. Receiving correct student data from the district is critical for accurate test administration, reporting, and accountability calculations.

Student Precode Data

“Precode” refers to the data files MDE sends to service providers with student information for testing. The precode files contain information from the student’s enrollment record (such as the school the student is enrolled in) and the assessments for which the student is eligible, along with any related information (such as accommodations).

Demographic fields included in precode data*:

- District Number, District Type
- School Number
- Grade
- Last Name
- First Name
- Middle Name
- Gender
- Birth Date
- MARSS/SSID Number
- MARSS Local Use Data (an optional field that districts may use for internal student identification purposes; MDE does not assign or track this number)

INFO! *Districts can enter a student’s preferred name in Test WES for MCA and MTAS administrations until preferred name is available to be submitted to MDE through Ed-Fi. A preferred name can be added to change how the student’s name appears in PearsonAccess Next for test administration (such as on the student testing ticket, on the session roster, and on the student’s screen in TestNav). Further information and instructions for how to enter a preferred name are included in the [Test WES Precode User Guide](#) (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Business and Finance > Data Submissions > Test WES). While not able to be sent in precode files for ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, preferred name can be manually adjusted in WIDA AMS. Contact mde.testing@state.mn.us for more information.

Demographic fields affecting precode selection:

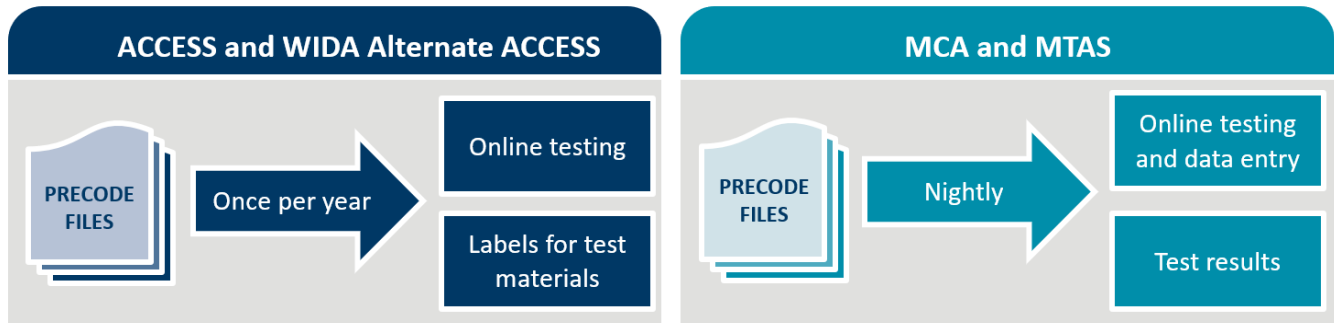
- English Learner
- State Aid Category
- Special Education Status
- Status End Date

Precode Files

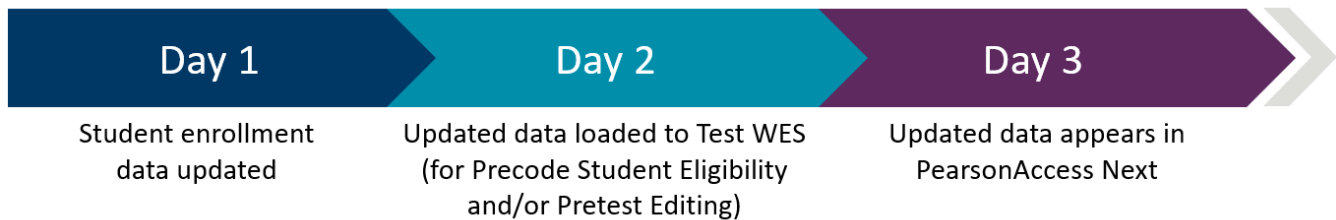
For ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, only one precode file is sent to DRC. This file includes all students in grades K–12 designated as English learners in student enrollment data, and it is used to load student data into WIDA AMS for online testing and to create student labels for paper test materials. This precode file is sent only **once** each year in December; the deadline to submit student enrollment updates is the day before MDE sends the precode data. Refer to the *Important Dates* section at the beginning of this manual for this deadline. Any student who is newly enrolled or newly identified as an English learner (after the precode file has been sent) must be added manually into WIDA AMS once administration task functionality becomes active in the system in January. A manual entry into WIDA AMS should be completed for any student who is reported as EL in a district’s student enrollment data and/or has demographic information bubbled on test booklets.

For MCA and MTAS, precode files with student enrollment information for students in grades 3–12 are sent nightly to Pearson throughout the school year, beginning when Pretest Editing opens in late November until the day before the end of the testing windows. (Refer to the *Important Dates* section at the beginning of this manual for the specific dates.)

Figure 9: When Precode Files are Sent to Service Providers



In order for student data to be loaded into PearsonAccess Next, any student enrollment updates must be submitted at least two business days in advance of online testing or data entry. Once student enrollment data is submitted to MDE, that data is gathered overnight and is available the next business day in Test WES for districts to make edits in Precode Student Eligibility (such as changing schools) or Pretest Editing (such as editing test assignments or supports/accommodations) before it is sent to Pearson. Any changes made in Precode Student Eligibility or Pretest Editing will be sent in the next precode file and will typically be reflected in PearsonAccess Next the following business day. Note: Changes made in Test WES over the weekend will be included in the precode file sent on Monday night. When students are dropped from enrollment in student enrollment data, their test eligibility is removed from PearsonAccess Next.



Many districts use a student information system to view and manage student data. Keep in mind that this data in the district’s system is not necessarily the same information that has been submitted to MDE through MARSS A/B files. If there are discrepancies, use available comparison reports to compare the data submitted through MARSS A/B files and synced with Ed-Fi, as Ed-Fi data is synced directly from the district student information system. Additional information is available on the [Ed-Fi](#) page of the MDE website (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Business and Finance > Data Submissions > Ed-Fi). Contact ed-fi.mde@state.mn.us for support.

Note: Districts that work with a Regional Management Information Center (RMIC) or other service provider to submit their enrollment data may need to provide their data earlier than the precode dates listed under the *Important Dates* section at the beginning of this manual. Districts should verify dates and timelines with their provider.

Precode Student Eligibility in Test WES

MDE’s Test WES is used throughout the year by DACs and other district staff for activities related to data editing and other essential assessment tasks. One of these activities, Precode Student Eligibility, is described here. The other Test WES activities are described in other chapters based on when they take place throughout the year:

- Completing Pretest Editing (Chapter 7)
- Selecting District Options and completing District Confirmations (Chapter 7)
- Reviewing and submitting Assessment Security Records (ASRs) (Chapter 5)
- Completing Posttest Editing (Chapter 10)

Districts may use Precode Student Eligibility in Test WES to investigate why students are not included in the precode files sent to Pearson for MCA and MTAS. (Note: For ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS, a precode file is sent only one time annually to WIDA and DRC, so these assessments do not appear in Precode Student Eligibility.) Precode Student Eligibility is also used to manually add students for MCA and MTAS who wish to test but who will not be enrolled in enrollment data (such as home-schooled or shared-time students), or to change where a dual-enrolled student will test, if needed. While Precode Student Eligibility is available when precode files are sent in late November, districts tend to use it most often when setting up testing sessions and during test administration.

Refer to the *Test WES Precode User Guide* posted on the [Test WES](#) page of the MDE website for additional information (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Business and Finance > Data Submissions > Test WES).

Valid Score Rules

“Valid score rules” are the rules for determining how many items need to be answered to report a score for a student’s test. The rules for determining valid scores varies by test.

ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS Valid Score Rules

For the grades 1–12 ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, the criteria outlined in Table 8 are used to determine if the student attempted the domain in order to generate a Valid Score (VS). If the attemptedness criteria are not met, a Not Attempted (NA) test code is received. Note: There are practice items at the beginning of each domain test. Practice items are not scored and therefore do not count toward an “attempt.”

Table 8. ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS Domain Attemptedness Criteria

| Domain | Minimum Criteria for “Attempting” the Domain |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Listening | Kindergarten ACCESS: A student response is recorded for one scored item. ACCESS Online: A student response is recorded for one scored item. ACCESS Paper: A student response is recorded for one scored item. WIDA Alternate ACCESS: A student response or non-response is recorded for one scored item. |

| Domain | Minimum Criteria for “Attempting” the Domain |
|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Reading | <p>Kindergarten ACCESS: A student response is recorded for one scored item.</p> <p>ACCESS Online: A student response is recorded for one scored item.</p> <p>ACCESS Paper: A student response is recorded for one scored item.</p> <p>WIDA Alternate ACCESS: A student response or non-response is recorded for one scored item.</p> |
| Speaking | <p>Kindergarten ACCESS: A student response is recorded for one scored item.</p> <p>ACCESS Online: The Record button was clicked for one task.</p> <p>ACCESS Paper: One task has been scored on the score sheet.</p> <p>WIDA Alternate ACCESS: A student response or non-response is recorded for one scored item.</p> |
| Writing | <p>Kindergarten ACCESS: A student response is recorded for one scored item.</p> <p>ACCESS Online (keyboarded): A visible key stroke is captured to one scored item (example: a letter, a symbol). Note: Space bar and returns do not count as key strokes.</p> <p>ACCESS Online (handwritten): A mark is made in the response space in the booklet.</p> <p>ACCESS Paper: A mark is made in the response space in the booklet.</p> <p>WIDA Alternate ACCESS: A student response or non-response is recorded for one scored item.</p> |

Refer to Table 9 below for information on determining composite scores for ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS.

Table 9. Determining Overall Composite Scores for ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS

| Domain Scores | Overall Composite Score |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| All domains have valid scores. | Score code of Valid Score (VS) is assigned for the overall composite score. |
| Some, but not all, domains have valid scores. | Score code of Not Complete (NC) is assigned for the overall composite score. |
| No domain has a valid score. | <p>Score code of Not Attempted (NA) is assigned for the overall composite score.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>If the same test code (for example, ABS (Absent) or DEC (Declined)) is indicated for all domains, the test code is assigned for the overall composite score.</p> |

MCA and MTAS Valid Score Rules

For MCA, students must respond to 90 percent of items to receive a Valid Score (VS). Students responding to one or more items but fewer than 90 percent receive a Not Complete (NC) test code. Students who start a test but do not respond to any items receive a Not Attempted (NA) test code.

For MTAS, a Test Administrator score entry for every operational task is required to receive a Valid Score (VS). Note: “Operational” means that the task counts toward the student’s score. When scores are submitted for at least one operational task but not all operational tasks, a Not Complete (NC) score code is received. If no scores are submitted for operational tasks, a Not Attempted (NA) test code is received.

Chapter 7 — Before Test Administration

Overview

This chapter contains information on policies and procedures related to planning and preparing for the administration of statewide assessments, including testing schedules, secure test materials and other allowed and prohibited materials, preparation of testing rooms, selection of Test Monitors and Test Administrators, student resources, and staff and District Assessment Coordinator (DAC) training requirements.

Scheduling Requirements and Estimated Test Administration Times

This section provides information for districts on scheduling test administrations, including estimated test administration times. All assessments must be administered within the applicable testing windows and follow any requirements outlined in this section. The testing windows for each assessment are located in the *Important Dates* section at the beginning of this manual. Districts are expected to schedule and plan for both initial testing dates as well as makeup dates. This schedule is to be posted on the district’s webpage, as discussed in Chapter 6, and must be updated as necessary.

Districts set their own schedules for testing, and MDE asks that they prioritize the best interests of students when doing so. MDE expects districts to schedule test administration early enough in the testing window to ensure all students have the opportunity to complete testing, and for data entry to be completed for applicable assessments. Administering the entire test or multiple domains on one day may work well for scheduling, but it may not be appropriate for students. Since each Minnesota district and charter school is uniquely structured, there is no one-size-fits-all way to schedule statewide tests. DACs can use the information in this chapter to inform their planning, but may also want to check with Test Administrators and Test Monitors to find out what has worked well for scheduling in their district in the past.

It is important to keep in mind the different requirements for each test when scheduling. For example, one subject of the MCA can be administered over multiple days, but a grades 1–12 ACCESS domain must be completed in one sitting. The following sections include detailed information on the scheduling requirements.

Scheduling ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS Administrations

Districts administer the ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS during the state-designated testing window. Within the district, the testing schedule can be set separately for each school, grade, and domain (as applicable for the test) as needed. Refer to the *Test Coordinator Manual* and the *Test Administrator Manual* in the [WIDA Secure Portal](#) for further information on scheduling and test administration.

Scheduling Kindergarten ACCESS Administrations

The Kindergarten ACCESS is administered in an individual setting, and the entire assessment takes an average of 45 minutes per student. It is recommended that the Kindergarten ACCESS be administered in one session. However, if needed, the test may be separated into two sessions with no more than two consecutive school

days in between the sessions. **NEW!** If it is estimated by an individual student’s IEP team that they will require more than two sessions to complete the assessment, districts must contact MDE to request approval.

During testing, a student is presented only with questions that the Test Administrator reasonably expects the student will be able to understand and respond to, based on the student’s responses to previous questions. Therefore, when considering estimated times, students with high English language proficiency will likely take longer and students with beginning English language proficiency might need significantly less time. Note: This average time does not include breaks during the test administration session, which may be appropriate for Kindergarten students.

Scheduling Grades 1–12 ACCESS Administrations

- For the ACCESS Online grades 1–12, the Listening and Reading domains must be administered first (preferably starting with Listening), with the Speaking and Writing domains following (in either order). When students finish the Listening and Reading tests, the platform evaluates their performance to assign them to the appropriate tier for the Speaking and Writing tests. Students are placed into one of three tiers for Speaking (Pre-A, A, or B/C) and one of two tiers for Writing (A or B/C).
- For the ACCESS Paper grades 1–12, the Listening and Reading domains must be administered first, followed by the Writing and Speaking domains. The Speaking domain must be administered in an individual setting.
- For the grades 1–12 ACCESS, each domain is scheduled in a separate testing session. Each domain is to be given in one sitting and cannot be scheduled across multiple days or times during a single day. Do not start testing a domain if a student will not be able to finish it in that sitting (such as before a lunch break or the end of the school day).



For grades 1–12 ACCESS, schedule each domain to be completed in one sitting.

- If the student is unable to finish the domain in the same sitting, the district must have plans in place for the student to finish it within the same day. Districts must also include students who require extended testing time within a day (which is a universal support available to all students) in their planning.
- In cases of illness, emergency, or technology-related issues that cannot be resolved by the service provider, students may finish the domain another day. Refer to *Breaks and Leaving During Testing* in Chapter 8 for additional information.
- For the rare case when an individual student is unable to complete the domain in the same day for any other reason, the student may still finish on another day. However, Test Administrators must contact the District or School Assessment Coordinator so that it can be documented on the *Test Administration Report (TAR)*; this allows District and School Assessment Coordinators to better track how often the situation arises so guidance around scheduling and monitoring student progress can be provided as needed within the district. Refer to *What Help Can Test Administrators and Test*

Monitors Give to Students in Chapter 8 for guidance on students who are making slow or no progress in a domain.

- Students who have an IEP or 504 plan indicating that a domain can be completed across multiple days may have one or more domains scheduled over multiple days, as required for this accommodation. Note: Extended time over multiple days is a very rare accommodation that must be reviewed and approved by MDE. Email mde.testing@state.mn.us to request approval. **INFO!** The request must include 1) the student’s MARSS/SSID number, 2) the student’s grade and school, 3) the student’s primary disability, 4) a student-specific rationale as to why extended time within a single day would not be sufficient, and 5) confirmation that the accommodation is indicated in the student’s IEP or 504 Plan. Do not include any other personally identifying information in the request, such as name, initials, or birth date.
 - While requiring one-on-one administration or assistive technology may be one of the factors for requesting extending time across multiple days, the support itself does not necessarily warrant an approval for this accommodation.
 - Additionally, in most cases, an extended time across multiple days accommodation request submitted to accommodate the Test Administrator’s schedule, or to guard against the off chance that the student will not be able to complete a domain in one sitting or within the day, will not be approved.
- Makeup test sessions can be scheduled any day after the initial administration days but must be completed before the end of the testing window.
- Different domains cannot be administered in the same space at the same time. For example, Listening cannot be administered in the same testing room where Speaking is being administered. However, as long as students are taking the same domain, it is possible for students from different grade-level clusters and tiers to test in the same room. Note: The Speaking Tier Pre-A and grades 1–3 Writing are exceptions to this guideline.

Tables 10 and 11 provide the total test administration time for the grades 1–12 ACCESS. Total test administration times take into account the time needed for Test Administrators to answer student questions and provide test materials or test directions, and/or for students to sign into the test.

The test administrations are designed to take no more time than indicated below, and data from WIDA suggests that students working productively will finish in those relative timeframes. Since ACCESS is a language proficiency test rather than an academic content test, spending more than WIDA’s estimated test administration time on a domain will generally not increase a student’s score. However, Test Administrators may use their professional judgement to extend more time to a student, while taking into consideration how productively the student is working.

Table 10. Testing Times for ACCESS Online Grades 1–12

| Test | Total Test Administration |
|-----------|---------------------------|
| Listening | 65 minutes |
| Reading | 60 minutes |
| Speaking | 50 minutes |
| Writing | 70–90 minutes |

Table 11. Testing Times for ACCESS Paper Grades 1–12

| Test | Total Test Administration |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Listening | 60 minutes |
| Reading | 70 minutes |
| Speaking | 45 minutes |
| Grade 1 Writing Tier A | 40 minutes |
| Grades 2–12 Writing Tier A | 75 minutes |
| Grades 1–12 Writing Tier B/C | 80 minutes |

Scheduling WIDA Alternate ACCESS Administrations

The four WIDA Alternate ACCESS domain tests can be administered in any order and are not timed. Due to the adaptive nature of the test and the unique abilities and behaviors of students, actual test times can vary widely. The different domain tests can be administered on different days, with no minimum or maximum break between the administrations. If needed and the testing schedule allows, students can stop within a domain and resume testing on a different day. **NEW!** If it is estimated by an individual student’s IEP team that they will require more than two days for any single domain, districts must contact MDE to request approval.

Pay close attention to the student throughout the test and consider resuming at a different time or day if the student is not responding as expected. Be aware that a student who is having difficulty engaging with the assessment is unlikely to fully demonstrate their linguistic abilities.

Table 12 lists the approximate WIDA Alternate ACCESS test administration times for scheduling purposes only. They include the time that may be needed to set up the testing space, prepare the students for test administration, and distribute test materials. **INFO!** These estimated times have not changed for the new WIDA Alternate ACCESS.

Table 12. Testing Times for WIDA Alternate ACCESS

| Test | Total Test Administration |
|-----------|---------------------------|
| Listening | 30 minutes |
| Reading | 30 minutes |
| Speaking | 30 minutes |
| Writing | 30 minutes |

Scheduling MCA Administrations

Districts administer the Reading, Mathematics, and Science MCAs during the state-designated testing windows. Within the district, the testing schedule can be set separately for each school and grade as needed.

- To maintain test security, it is best practice to schedule and administer one subject on the same day(s) in a school for the majority of the students (in a given grade) before administering the next subject.
- For high school science, test administration can be scheduled based on coursework completion (meaning high school students who completed their life science course in the fall can take the Science MCA at the beginning of the testing window, while students completing their life science course in the spring can test near the end of the window).
- Students who are absent or not enrolled on test administration day(s) can make up their test at any point within the testing window. In order to maintain test security, the makeup test session should typically occur after the initial administration in the school. There may be exceptions when a test needs to be administered early (for example, a student is moving out of the district) but the majority of makeup sessions should be held after the initial administrations.
- Districts may decide to administer different grades and/or subjects in the same testing room, but Test Monitors should be aware of any differences in administration or directions (such as the use of headphones or scripted instructions about calculators) that may need to be clarified for students. While more uncommon, districts may administer paper and online tests in the same room if they choose, but districts must consider what is in the best interest of students and any accommodations or supports specified in the IEP or 504 plan. If administered together, Test Monitors must understand that both versions of the *Testing Directions* (online and paper) need to be used, and they must be familiar with the differences in administration.
- The MCA and MTAS are not timed. Students should be allowed to continue working on a test as long as they are making progress. Districts must have a plan in place for students who need extra time, as well as for students who complete their test and cannot be in the testing room on subsequent days. Refer to *What Students May Do after They Complete a Test* in Chapter 8 for more information.

MCA Online Test Administrations

Districts have flexibility in how online MCA administrations are scheduled, and students are not required to exit the test at the same place as other students.

- Once students go on to the next group of questions (Reading and Mathematics MCAs) or section (Science MCA), or exit the test for more than 20 minutes, they cannot go back to items completed previously.
 - Students must answer each item before they can go to the next item, but they can review their previous answers in the current group of questions/section before going to the next group of questions/section.
 - At the end of the test, students can only review items within the current group of questions/section that they have taken during that test session (meaning students cannot review all items in the test).
- Test Monitors should use the scripted language in the *Testing Directions: Online* to alert students prior to the end of the testing session so they have time to review their answers before exiting.

One option for all subjects is to schedule test sessions based on time, using the tables that appear later in this section. Note: Students may exit at any time within a reading passage or science scenario, as each item is shown with its associated passage or scenario. However, it is best practice for test administration and test security for students to finish all items associated with a passage or scenario before exiting so they do not need to reread it when they resume testing. (This does not apply to the Mathematics MCA as each question is independent.) Test Monitors may remind students to finish the passage or scenario they are working on before exiting.

If the district wishes to schedule testing so that most students complete the test in the same number of days, there are some important differences to consider based on the design and construction of tests for each subject. Refer to the MCA information in Chapter 2 for more details about adaptive and fixed-form assessments and each subject's test design.

- For **Reading MCA**, there are several groups of passages with associated items. If a district is testing over multiple days, students should exit on the last item in a group of items (which also corresponds to the end of a reading passage). Keep in mind that the Reading MCA is adaptive, so the number and length of passages each student receives will vary. For example, in grade 5, Student A may have two passages and Student B may have three passages but both will have finished a group when they finish item 32.
- For **Mathematics MCA**, the number of items should be used for scheduling. A single number (such as item 25) or range of numbers (such as between items 25–30) may be used for planning where to stop testing.
- For **Science MCA**, there are four sections in the test. If a district is testing over multiple days, two days should be scheduled, and students should exit after completing the first two sections of the test (as each half of the test is roughly equal in length). Scheduling by item number does not work for Science MCA because the item numbers start over in each section and vary by grade and form.

Figure 10: Scheduling to Ensure Students Finish in the Same Number of Days

| Reading MCA | Mathematics MCA | Science MCA |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Schedule by the number of items and the end of a group of questions | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Schedule by the number of itemsYou can use a single number or range of numbers | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Schedule by sectionYou cannot schedule by item number because they start over in each section |

Districts may also consider both setting specific times and setting a range of items to complete. For example, scheduling three 50-minute testing sessions for grade 3 math with a goal of completing 15–20 items per session.

Note: Keep in mind that some students may not be able to complete the items planned for the session, so districts need to have a plan in place to address this situation (such as students finish the items in a different testing location or, on the next day of testing, students resume where they left off).

The estimated test administration time tables below are separated by subject. The information in the tables is based on data from the 2021–22 MCA administrations; these tables will be revised in future years only when there are significant test design changes or other circumstances. Information about estimated times is provided to DACs in the *Procedures Manual* for scheduling purposes; for Test Monitors, the tables included in the *Testing Directions* only include the number of items by group/section so they have the information needed to know when to stop testing for the session, based on the considerations described previously in this section.

- The Number of Groups/Sections and Approximate Number of Items columns are provided to give a general sense of the length of the test. The number of items represents the total number of items on the test, including operational items (which count towards the student’s score) and field test items.
NEW! Off-grade items have been removed from grades 3–8 Reading and Mathematics MCAs based on legislation passed in 2023; refer to Chapter 2. The removal of these items is not expected to affect the estimated test administration times but the number of sections for grades 3–8 reading has been reduced.
 - The [Testing Directions](#), which are updated annually, include the final number of items by group/section, as this information is not available when the *Procedures Manual* is published (PearsonAccess Next > Preparing for Testing > Testing Directions).
 - Keep in mind that the length of time to read passages and/or complete items (both multiple choice and technology enhanced) will vary by student. This may be especially true for the adaptive Reading and Mathematics MCAs, where the item difficulty level also varies by student.
- The Typical Range for Scheduling column provides the amount of time it took for 50–75 percent of students to complete testing, rounded up to the nearest half hour. The time includes both the student review of test directions and student work time. It does not include the time needed for students to sign into the test or for Test Monitors to provide scripted directions from the *Testing Directions: Online* and answer questions from students.

- The typical range for scheduling times are based on collected data that showed how long Minnesota students spent completing the test.
- Since the time ranges account for the time needed for up to 75 percent of students to complete testing, districts must account for and/or have plans in place for students who need additional time.
- The Estimated Time to Impact Performance column provides information related to student performance and the amount of time spent testing. Based on past administration data, average scale scores increased as time spent testing increased, up to the times listed below. Beyond this point, the average scale scores plateaued or leveled out. Therefore, scheduling more than the estimated time to impact performance might not lead to significant gains in student achievement. This data is provided to give additional context for discussions with district and school staff for general scheduling purposes.
 - While students should be allowed sufficient time to complete testing without pressure to finish, scheduling hours beyond the estimated time to impact performance may not increase performance for most students.
 - For Reading and Science MCAs, the estimated time to impact performance is within the typical range for scheduling. For Mathematics MCA, the estimated time to impact performance is higher than the typical range; this means that while students are typically taking less time to complete the test, taking some appropriate additional time may positively impact student performance.
- Each district should consider its own information and experience related to testing time. If different lengths of time have worked well in the past (based on district testing time reports and/or feedback from staff), those times should not be replaced with the information provided in this manual without careful consideration.
 - Annually, following test administration, Testing Time Reports are posted for DACs in [PearsonAccess Next](#) under Published Reports. These reports are available at the district level and provide cumulative testing time information by student. The time (in seconds) indicates the total time a student spent on both test content and non-scorable items (for example, student directions, section end pages, start of section).
 - These reports are intended to be used in conjunction with information provided by MDE so that districts can plan for future administrations by confirming the amount of time students tested, or to identify trends by grade or subject across the district. The data provided in these reports are not meant to be used to make decisions about individual students.

Table 13. Estimated Test Administration Times for Online Reading MCA

| Grade and Test | Number of Groups of Items | Approximate Number of Items | Typical Range for Scheduling | Estimated Time to Impact Performance |
|------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Grades 3–5 Reading MCA | 4 | 50 | 1.5–2 hours | Up to 2 hours |
| Grades 6–8 Reading MCA | 4 | 55 | 1.5–2 hours | Up to 2 hours |
| Grade 10 Reading MCA | 4 | 60 | 1.5–2 hours | Up to 2 hours |

Table 14. Estimated Test Administration Times for Online Mathematics MCA

| Grade and Test | Number of Groups of Items | Approximate Number of Items | Typical Range for Scheduling | Estimated Time to Impact Performance |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Grades 3–8 Mathematics MCA | 5 | 50 | 1.5–2 hours | Up to 2.5 hours |
| Grade 11 Mathematics MCA | 6 | 55 | 1.5 hours | Up to 2 hours |

Table 15. Estimated Test Administration Times for Online Science MCA

| Grade and Test | Number of Sections | Approximate Number of Items | Typical Range for Scheduling | Estimated Time to Impact Performance |
|-------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Grade 5 Science MCA | 4 | 50 | 1–1.5 hours | Up to 1.5 hours |
| Grade 8 Science MCA | 4 | 60 | 1–1.5 hours | Up to 1.5 hours |
| High School Science MCA | 4 | 80 | 1–1.5 hours | Up to 1.5 hours |

MCA Paper Test Administrations

When scheduling test sessions for paper test administrations, ensure sufficient time is scheduled for staff members to enter the student responses online after the student has completed testing and before the end of the testing window. In order for a paper test to be scored, district or school staff must enter student responses from the test book online during the testing window. Student responses in MCA paper test books are NOT scanned and scored when they are returned to Pearson; only student responses entered online are scored.



Pearson does not score MCA paper tests, so plan for time to enter student responses online during the testing window in order for tests to be scored.

For students using paper test materials, testing can be scheduled by segment or by time. If a student will not complete a segment during the testing session, scripted instructions for ending the test are included in the *Testing Directions: Paper*. Estimated test administration times are provided below to help with scheduling. For Test Monitors, the tables in the [Testing Directions](#) will include the number of items by segment (PearsonAccess Next > Preparing for Testing > Testing Directions). The Total Test Administration time is meant to provide an estimate of the length of student work time. It does not include the time needed for Test Monitors to provide scripted directions from the *Testing Directions: Paper* and answer student questions. Note: Since testing time data is not available for paper administrations, each district should consider its own information and experience when scheduling testing.

Table 16. Estimated Test Administration Times for Paper Reading MCA

| Grade and Test | Number of Segments | Approximate Number of Items | Total Test Administration |
|------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Grades 3–5 Reading MCA | 4 | 50 | 1–2.5 hours |
| Grades 6–8 Reading MCA | 4 | 55 | 1–2.5 hours |
| Grade 10 Reading MCA | 4 | 60 | 1–2.5 hours |

Table 17. Estimated Test Administration Times for Paper Mathematics MCA

| Grade and Test | Number of Segments | Approximate Number of Items | Total Test Administration |
|----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Grades 3–8 Mathematics MCA | 4 | 50 | 1–2.5 hours |
| Grade 11 Mathematics MCA | 4 | 55 | 1–2 hours |

Table 18. Estimated Test Administration Times for Paper Science MCA

| Grade and Test | Number of Segments | Approximate Number of Items | Total Test Administration |
|-------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Grade 5 Science MCA | 2 | 40 | 0.5–1.5 hours |
| Grade 8 Science MCA | 2 | 50 | 0.5–1.5 hours |
| High School Science MCA | 2 | 70 | 0.5–1.5 hours |

Scheduling MTAS Administrations

Learner Characteristics Inventory (LCI) data must be entered prior to entering MTAS scores, and all scores must be entered before the end of the testing window. LCI data may be entered throughout the entire testing window, along with MTAS scores, but LCI data may also be entered beginning one week before the test window opens in preparation for administration. Refer to Chapter 2 for more information about the LCI. LCI and Data Collection Forms are not returned to Pearson for scoring; only data entered online are scored. These forms must be kept on file after data entry. Note that the MTAS testing window for all subjects is the same as the Reading and Mathematics MCAs testing window. While the Science MCA testing window ends one week later, the Science MTAS window ends at the same time as the Reading and Mathematics MCAs.



Pearson does not scan MTAS materials or forms, so plan for time to enter data online during the testing window in order for tests to be scored.

Remember that the Science MTAS window ends at the same time as Reading Mathematics MCAs, not with Science MCA.

Test administration times will vary for each student. The estimated times for Reading MTAS and Science MTAS are longer based on the time that may be needed to administer field test tasks in preparation for the Alternate MCA. For additional information, refer to Chapter 2.

Table 19. Estimated Test Administration Times for MTAS

| Subject and Test | Estimated Time |
|------------------|----------------|
| Reading MTAS | 60–90 minutes |
| Mathematics MTAS | 20–40 minutes |
| Science MTAS | 60–90 minutes |

Materials Ordering Window in WIDA AMS for ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS

Districts order test materials during the Materials Ordering window in WIDA AMS beginning in late November through mid-December. This ordering is done when districts indicate the following information by school:

- The number of Kindergarten students
- The number of WIDA Alternate ACCESS students by grade cluster
- The number of ACCESS Online students by grade cluster
 - ACCESS Online students in grades 1–5 will use Writing Test Booklets to handwrite responses for the Writing test. These printed materials will be sent automatically for the indicated number of ACCESS Online testers in these grade clusters. While a keyboarding option exists for the grade cluster 4–5 Writing test, the default response mode in Minnesota for the grade cluster 4–5 Writing test is handwriting. More information can be found in Chapter 8 under *Test Administration Considerations for ACCESS*.
- The number of ACCESS Paper students by grade cluster and tier for eligible students who will be taking all four domains on paper only
 - ACCESS Paper test booklets can be ordered either as accommodations for students with IEPs or 504 plans or for eligible students enrolled in U.S. schools for less than a year. Do not order ACCESS Paper test booklets for ACCESS Online testers in grades 1–5. Refer to *Test Administration Considerations for ACCESS* in Chapter 8 for additional information.
- The number of large print and braille test booklets by grade cluster and tier or format for eligible students

If this information is not indicated by the December deadline, districts will not automatically receive test materials for Kindergarten ACCESS, WIDA Alternate ACCESS, ACCESS Online Writing test booklets (for grades 1–5), or any ACCESS Paper test booklets. In this case, an additional order would need to be placed for the necessary test materials.

The amount of test materials you receive for ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS is based on what you enter in WIDA AMS.

Grades 1–5 ACCESS online uses Writing test booklets, and you will automatically receive them for the number of online testers you enter.



In December, MDE uploads a precode file to WIDA AMS. This precode file is sent once each year, and it includes all students indicated as English learners in student enrollment data. It is used to load student records into WIDA AMS for online testing and to create student labels for Kindergarten ACCESS, WIDA Alternate ACCESS, ACCESS Online Writing Test Booklets (for grades 1–5), and ACCESS Paper Test Booklets. Any English learners who are newly enrolled or newly identified as EL after the precode file has been sent must be manually added into WIDA AMS by district staff. If a district manually adds a student to WIDA AMS, DACs must ensure that the student is being reported as EL in their student enrollment data. The *Important Dates* at the beginning of this manual includes the dates for the Materials Ordering window and the precode file.

Test Materials Quantities for English Language Proficiency Accountability Assessments

Test materials are automatically sent based on the information the district has indicated during Materials Ordering in WIDA AMS. Tables 20–23 describe the test materials available for Kindergarten ACCESS, WIDA Alternate ACCESS, ACCESS Online grades 1–12, and ACCESS Paper grades 1–12.

Table 20. Test Materials Available for Kindergarten ACCESS

| Test Materials | Description |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Test Administrator Script | Test Administrators use this script and follow it exactly throughout test administration. |
| Student Storybook | Test Administrators read this with students and refer to the pictures and graphic organizers as they ask students questions. |
| Activity Board | Test Administrators place this in front of students and open one panel at a time as they go through the expository story and ask students questions. |
| Cards and Card Pouch | Test Administrators hold onto the cards during test administration and place them in front of students as directed in the script. Students point to, match, or move cards to respond to test items. |
| Student Response Booklet | Test Administrators record scores for student responses in this booklet throughout the test. Students use this booklet to record their own responses for the Writing portions of the test. |

Table 21. Test Materials Available for WIDA Alternate ACCESS

| Test Materials | Description |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Test Administrator Script | Test Administrators use this script and follow it exactly throughout test administration. |
| Test Booklet | The test booklet contains the pictures and prompts students see for the Listening, Reading, and Speaking domain tests. |
| Student Response Booklet | The student response booklet contains space to note details about the test administration and to mark scores for the Listening, Reading, and Speaking domain tests. For the Writing domain test, it contains the pictures, prompts, and response space. It also includes the Individual Characteristics Questionnaire (ICQ). |

Table 22. Test Materials Available for ACCESS Online Grades 1–12

| Test Materials | Description |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Test Administrator’s Script | <p>Test Administrators use this script and follow it exactly throughout test administration. The following are available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade 1 (secure material) • Grades 2–3 (secure material) • Grades 4–12 (not a secure material) |
| Grades 1–3 Writing Test Booklet | <p>This test booklet contains the pictures and prompts students see during the Writing test administration as well as space for students to handwrite their responses. The Writing test booklet is different than the ACCESS Paper test booklet. All students in grades 1–3 take the ACCESS Online Writing test using printed Writing test booklets. The following are available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade 1, Tier A • Grade 1, Tier B/C • Grades 2–3, Tier A • Grades 2–3, Tier B/C |

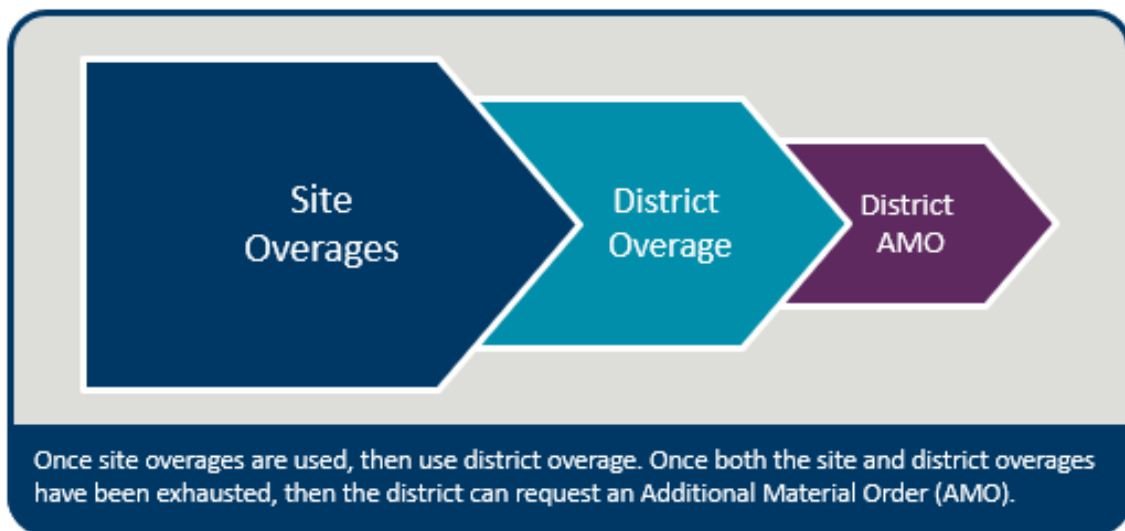
| Test Materials | Description |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Grades 4–12 Writing Response Booklet | <p>This response booklet contains space for students to handwrite their responses to the Writing test prompts presented in the online test. These booklets are needed only for students who will handwrite instead of type their responses. The Writing test booklet is different than the ACCESS Paper test booklet. Note: Grades 6–12 Writing response booklets are only available to order during the additional orders window because the default response mode for Minnesota is keyboarding. Having students handwrite their responses is a student-based decision at these grade levels. The following are available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grades 4–5, Tier A • Grades 4–5, Tier B/C • Grades 6–8, Tier A • Grades 6–8, Tier B/C • Grades 9–12, Tier A • Grades 9–12, Tier B/C |

Table 23. Test Materials Available for ACCESS Paper Grades 1–12

| Test Materials | Description |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Test Administrator’s Script | Test Administrators use this script and follow it exactly throughout test administration. |
| Speaking Test Booklet | This test booklet contains the pictures and prompts students see during the Speaking test. Students do not write in this booklet, and it is a reusable item. |
| Reading, Writing, and Listening Test Booklets | <p>These test booklets are used by students to record their responses to the Listening, Reading, and Writing tests. This booklet must be labeled, distributed to students during test administration, collected, verified as having been completed correctly and completely, and returned for central scoring.</p> <p>Note: Test Administrators also record student scores for the Speaking test in this test booklet.</p> |
| Listening and Speaking CD | This CD is played during Listening and Speaking test administrations. |
| Large Print Test Materials Kit (accommodation) | Large print test materials are printed in 18-point font for students who require this accommodation. Student responses recorded on large print materials must be transcribed into a regular print test booklet for scoring. |

| Test Materials | Description |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Braille Test Materials Kit (accommodation) | Each braille test kit contains an embossed test booklet, a test booklet for transcription, a combined <i>Test Administrator’s Script</i> with all administrative materials, a Speaking test booklet, transcriber’s notes, and a CD of audio files. The embossed test booklet contains tactile graphics, labels, and picture descriptions. Each braille test kit includes sample items for the specified grade-level cluster and braille code. |
| Human Reader Accommodation Script (accommodation) | INFO! For the in-person human reader accommodation, the Human Reader Accommodation Script replaces the <i>Test Administrator’s Script</i> for each ACCESS Paper domain test for which the accommodation is required. It replaces the CD when used for the Listening and/or Speaking domains. It must be ordered by contacting DRC during the additional orders window if it is required. |

All test materials indicated during the Materials Ordering window will be shipped to the district. The test materials shipments automatically include overage for both schools and districts to ensure that sufficient quantities are available, so overage should not be manually added when completing the initial materials order. WIDA requests that districts use both the district overage and school overage before placing additional orders, so DACs should verify whether there are available testing materials before requesting more.



Once the overages have been used, DACs can request additional test materials during the additional orders window in WIDA AMS, which is listed in the *Important Dates* at the beginning of this manual. Districts should combine all additional test material needs from individual buildings as **one district order**, and this order should be placed by the district. As a member of the WIDA consortium, member states are required to limit the amount of additional orders to reduce waste and keep shipping costs down for all members. WIDA requests that districts try to place **only one additional order** per year. Note that materials that are only available in additional orders (such as the human reader script) are not included in the count of additional orders. MDE will follow up with DACs when multiple additional orders are placed to confirm the need for those additional materials.

Pretest Editing for MCA and MTAS

Pretest Editing in Test WES allows districts to verify or enter the requested information for MCA and MTAS so that 1) students are indicated in precode for the correct assessment (with or without the appropriate universal supports and/or accommodations) and 2) the appropriate MCA paper test materials or MTAS test materials are automatically included in the initial shipment of test materials to the district or schools by Pearson (if indicated by the January deadline).

The following tasks are completed during Pretest Editing by district staff:

- Confirm student test assignment: Each student has been assigned an MCA or MTAS test in reading, mathematics, and science (when applicable) based on their past assessments. Any students with an MTAS test assignment by the January deadline will have MTAS test materials automatically sent for them (unless otherwise indicated in District Options; more information below). Districts can change a student's test assignment as appropriate in Test WES; districts cannot change test assignments in PearsonAccess Next.
- Indicate student universal supports and accommodations for MCA in Test WES: Select the universal supports and accommodations individual students will need during testing. **INFO!** Only the universal supports that require a code are entered in Pretest Editing. Codes can be entered or removed as needed throughout the testing windows, but must be done at least one business day before testing. The applicable paper test materials will be automatically sent if the applicable codes are indicated by the January deadline. Any changes made after this deadline may require placing an order for materials in PearsonAccess Next. Note: Changing the test or entering accommodations in Test WES does not automatically generate a test materials order.

Pretest Editing continues until the day before the last day of the testing windows so that districts can continue to update student enrollment and eligibility information in PearsonAccess Next. Refer to the [Test WES Pretest Editing User Guide](#) for additional information (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Data Submissions > Test WES). The *Important Dates* at the beginning of this manual includes the dates and deadlines for Pretest Editing.



The amount of materials you receive for MCA and MTAS is based on what you enter in Pretest Editing in Test WES before the January deadline.

After that deadline, you can still make changes in Pretest Editing, but you also need to order any corresponding paper test materials in PearsonAccess Next.

District Options and District Confirmations

Districts provide information to MDE by indicating their District Options and District Confirmations. The deadlines for completing each of these are indicated on the applicable screens in Test WES and are included on the *Important Dates* at the beginning of this manual.

District Options

- District options for test materials shipment: Districts have options for the delivery location and delivery dates for the shipment of MCA paper and MTAS test materials. The options selected apply to both MCA and MTAS.
- District option for MTAS test materials: Districts may choose if they want to receive MTAS test materials automatically based on precode data or if they want to order them separately in additional orders in PearsonAccess Next (to reduce the number of MTAS materials being sent). Refer to *Test Materials Quantities for MCA and MTAS* below for more information.
- District options for student results labels and paper copies of Individual Student Results (ISRs): Districts indicate whether they want to receive printed individual student results labels to place in cumulative folders (default is no) and/or paper copies of ISRs to send home to families (default is yes). Electronic versions of both the student results labels and ISRs are also available in PearsonAccess Next and can be printed out by the district.

District Confirmations

- District confirmation of ISR delivery: Minnesota requires confirmation from districts that ISRs from the previous year's statewide assessment administrations have been delivered to families. DACs must confirm that their districts provided the ISRs (electronically or paper copies) to families no later than Dec. 1.
- District confirmation of alternate assessment eligibility: IEP teams must verify each year that students meet the participation criteria/eligibility requirements, and DACs must confirm that all students selected to take the WIDA Alternate ACCESS and/or MTAS will meet the requirements at the time of testing.
- District confirmation of supports and accommodations: Districts must confirm that all policies and procedures were followed to ensure that students receive the supports or accommodations that they require during testing for all statewide assessments.
- District confirmation of training: DACs must confirm before testing that all staff with any role in test administration have completed required trainings, including the DAC.
- District confirmation of Posttest Editing: If no edits were needed for the district, DACs must complete the confirmation by the close of Posttest Editing. If edits have been made, DACs can also complete this confirmation to let MDE know that all posttest editing is complete.

Test Materials Quantities for MCA and MTAS

Initial Test Materials Shipment

For MCA testing, some universal supports and accommodations are built into the assessment (like color contrast or answer masking) or are part of the administration (like a scribe), while other accommodations require paper test materials. Test materials are shipped to the district or individual schools based on the option selected during Pretest Editing under District Options.

In order to receive MCA paper test materials in the initial test materials shipment, districts must indicate the applicable code during Pretest Editing in Test WES by the January deadline (refer to the *Important Dates* at the beginning of this manual).

All students using paper test materials as an accommodation for MCA respond directly in their paper test books. District staff must enter student responses in a Data Entry form in TestNav before the end of the testing window; no separate answer documents are used. Pearson does not scan or score any MCA paper test books.

Table 24 outlines the test materials available for MCA.

Table 24. MCA Test Materials Available for Accommodations

| Test Materials | Description | Reading MCA | Math MCA | Science MCA |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------|-------------|
| Regular print test books | Test book printed in 12-point font | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 18-pt large print test book | Test book printed in 18-point font | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 24-pt large print test book | Test book printed in 24-point font | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Braille test book | Test book provided in Unified English Braille (UEB) format, available in both contracted and uncontracted formats | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Script | The script is used by the Test Monitor to read the test to the student. For the Mathematics MCA, the script must be used in conjunction with a paper test book as the script cannot be created to align with the adaptive online test. For the Science MCA, the script contains two sections and it can be used in conjunction with the online fixed-form test or with paper test books. | N/A | ✓ | ✓ |

For MTAS, student information is sent in precode to Pearson if the MTAS test assignment is indicated during Pretest Editing. In order to receive MTAS materials in the initial test materials shipment, districts must indicate the applicable code during Pretest Editing in Test WES by the January deadline (refer to the *Important Dates* at the beginning of this manual). All MTAS materials are paper-based.

Since MTAS materials can be used for more than one student, districts may choose (under District Options in Test WES) to order MTAS materials in additional orders rather than receiving them automatically. This may be helpful if the district has historically received more materials than needed.

Table 25: MTAS Test Materials Available

| Test Materials | Description |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Task Administration Manual, Presentation Pages, Passages and/or Phenomena Book, Response Option Cards | <p>These materials are provided as a kit for test administration, and one kit can be used for more than one student in the same grade. The Task Administration Manual contains administration information and the task scripts for the Test Administrator. The Test Administrator uses the Presentation Pages and Response Option Cards to administer the tasks to the students. A separate Passages and/or Phenomena Book is also provided for grades containing reading and/or science and is used to present Alternate MCA field test tasks to students for reading and science.</p> <p>The following materials are available by grade:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3, 4, 6, 7: Reading and Mathematics • 5, 8: Reading, Mathematics, and Science • 10: Reading • 11: Mathematics • High School: Science |

Additional Orders

Once the January deadline for the initial test materials shipment has passed, the DAC must order any MCA and MTAS test materials during the additional orders windows in PearsonAccess Next. These testing materials would be for new students who enroll in the district or for students who did not have an accommodation or MTAS test assignments indicated by the deadline.



Indicating a paper accommodation or changing a test assignment in Pretest Editing does not automatically generate a test materials order in PearsonAccess Next.

In order for test materials to arrive in time for test administration, districts have until noon on the last Tuesday of the testing windows to place any additional orders. The *Important Dates* at the beginning of this manual includes the additional orders windows for each assessment.

Preparing for Test Administration

Testing Rooms

- Rooms should have adequate lighting, a comfortable temperature, and a quiet atmosphere.
- The location must be a closed room that is being used only for testing, not a public venue (such as in a part of the library where students and staff can walk by).
- If testing in a large room, ensure the room can be set up to maintain test security or plan for additional Test Administrators/Monitors to be present; refer to *Seating Arrangements* below.
- For online administrations:
 - Tests may be administered in a computer lab or a regular classroom.
 - Only district-owned computers or devices can be used for student online testing. Because of technology preparation and test security concerns, student-owned computers or devices are not permitted. Devices issued to students by the school can be used for testing; these devices can be used for activities other than testing or taken home, as permitted by the district. **NEW!** If a student-owned device is used for student online testing, the test must be invalidated.
 - For the rare situation where a student may need to use a student-owned device for a specific accommodation need (such as assistive technology), the district must request this exception from MDE, and MDE must approve it before test administration.
 - Ensure students have enough space on a writing surface for their testing device and any related materials (such as scratch paper). For the grades 4–5 ACCESS Writing domain, students must also have room for their test booklet.
- For paper administrations:
 - The ideal testing room is a typical classroom.
 - Each student should have a writing surface that accommodates the test book and any allowable materials (such as calculators or math manipulatives).
- For individual administrations (Kindergarten ACCESS, WIDA Alternate ACCESS, or MTAS, or for an accommodation, if needed), the test may be administered in a classroom or other room where instruction is provided. However, other students are not allowed in the room while the test is being administered.
- Testing in a room that has an active security camera is allowed; however, test security is to be considered and the following steps are considered best practices:
 - Turn off or disable the ability to control remotely (and therefore zoom in or focus on test content).
 - Prior to testing, ensure that no content from any screen is visible on the video.
 - If these steps cannot be taken due to the functionality of existing cameras, discuss options for reducing the risk of a security violation (for example, limit staff who have access to the video feed, delete the video feed at the end of the day, situate computer screens so content is not visible to the camera).

Freedom from Distractions

- Only students taking the test or trained staff administering the test are allowed to be in the room; other students, staff, or visitors are not permitted to enter or be in the room while testing is in progress. The exceptions to this are:
 - Monitors who are required to observe test administration (such as the DAC conducting observations in the district, an MDE monitor during a site visit)
 - Students who finish testing in the current testing session; although these students may remain in the room, other students who have completed testing previously cannot. Refer to *What Students May Do after They Complete a Test* in Chapter 8.
- Take appropriate actions to reduce noise, such as limiting the use of alarms (except emergency alarms), bells, and announcements, and scheduling testing around planned emergency drills.
- The doors of each testing room are to be closed during test administration. Post signs on the doors stating “Testing—Do Not Enter” or “Testing—Do Not Disturb.”

Seating Arrangements

- All efforts should be made to have at least one Test Administrator/Test Monitor for every 30 students. Choosing 30 as the number of students is meant to reflect a typical classroom size. Additional Test Administrators or Test Monitors or other precautions, like privacy screens or extra spacing, should be considered if more students than the typical classroom are being tested and/or the testing room is not conducive for active monitoring. The 30:1 ratio helps ensure that staff can successfully monitor the room.
 - While WIDA recommends smaller group sizes for Listening and Reading ACCESS Online grades 1–12 administrations (no more than 15 students), MDE allows larger group sizes with appropriate monitoring and consideration given for the best interest of students.
 - **NEW!** Due to test security and increased incidents of plagiarism, MDE requires districts to follow WIDA’s recommendations for group sizes for Writing (no more than 15 students) and Speaking (no more than 5 students).
- Students who are testing should have enough space between each other to ensure that they work independently. The potential for student cheating can be minimized by creating seating arrangements where students cannot easily see each other’s tests.
 - Separate computer monitors as much as possible, and stagger seating to further limit what students can see on other monitors.
 - Spread students around the computer lab or classroom to the extent possible.
 - For the ACCESS Speaking domain, ensure there is enough space between students so that each student’s headset is recording only their speech.
 - If students are testing at tables and not individual desks, ensure that there is adequate space between each student. **INFO!** Regardless of where a student is located in the testing room, ensure that there is enough space between students and consider what students are able to view from different vantage points.

- When considering how to space students around the room, ensure that the Test Administrator or Test Monitor can see all students in a direct view or plan for additional staff to monitor testing.
- If space is limited and students can potentially see other screens or test materials, consider any of the following in addition to actively monitoring to ensure students are working independently:
 - Using commercial privacy screens or something similar (for example, taping cardboard to the sides of monitors so that it extends out from the front of the screen) or creating a barrier (for example, with desktop computer towers)
 - Assigning additional Test Administrators/Test Monitors

Materials Allowed during Testing

Refer to the applicable *Testing Directions* for specific lists of materials allowed during MCA test administrations. Detailed information for ACCESS is included below as applicable. Materials may be provided by the school or student, unless otherwise specified.

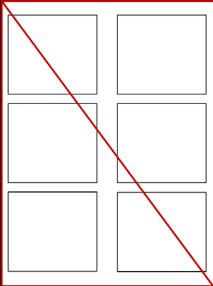
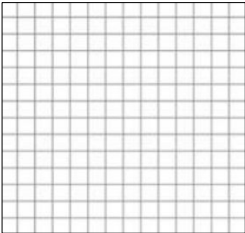
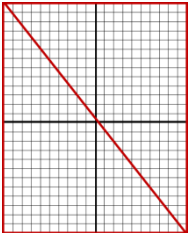
- **Calculators**—When allowed, handheld calculators may be supplied by the school, or students may use their own. Handheld calculators are not allowed on the online grades 3–8 Mathematics MCA. Refer to the *Calculator Use* section in Chapter 8 for more details on calculators.
- **Pencils or Pens**—Allowable pencils and pens vary by test and/or administration mode:
 - For printed ACCESS test materials (ACCESS Paper test booklets and ACCESS Online writing response booklets), students must use **only** a Number 2 pencil in order for the test to be scanned and scored. Similarly, Test Administrators must use **only** a Number 2 pencil in order for the Kindergarten ACCESS or WIDA Alternate ACCESS to be scanned and scored.
 - For ACCESS Listening, Reading, and Writing domains, and for MCA online testing, students may use either pencils or pens with scratch paper. Note: Using scratch paper is not allowed for the Speaking domain.
 - For MCA paper test materials, students may use either pencils or pens to mark answers in the paper test book (since district staff will later enter the responses in Pearson’s TestNav system).
- **Wired headphones**—Headphones may be supplied by the school, or students may use their own.
 - For ACCESS:
 - Headphones must be provided for the online Reading, Listening, and Writing domains of ACCESS.
 - Headsets with built-in microphones are required for the Speaking domain of grades 1–12 ACCESS. Districts need to ensure they have enough headsets with microphones to administer the Speaking domain. (For more information on headsets for ACCESS, refer to the *ACCESS for ELLs Headset Specifications* in the [WIDA Secure Portal](#).)
 - For MCA:
 - Headphones are required for the online Mathematics and Science MCAs because text-to-speech and the white noise accessibility are available for all students throughout the test.

- Headphones are recommended for online Reading MCA because text-to-speech is available for the directions at the beginning of the test as well as for the white noise accessibility feature available for all students throughout the test.
 - Bluetooth headphones are not allowed as they have the ability to connect to and receive information from a device other than the testing device, which cannot be verified by the Test Administrator or Test Monitor during testing. MDE understands that this policy can lead to some logistical challenges for districts, but this test security policy is consistent with those in states across the nation and for national tests; they also come directly from recommendations by nationally recognized test security experts. Note: There are exceptions for amplification devices, including personal hearing aids that use Bluetooth capabilities. Refer to *Universal Supports for Standards-Based Accountability Assessments* in Chapter 4 for more information.
- **Mouse and external or wired keyboard**—A wired and external mouse and keyboard are recommended to ensure a successful testing experience. Note: If multiple students are using a wireless mouse and keyboard, there may be increased interference in signals in a confined area. Districts should use their existing experience with wired and wireless equipment in non-testing situations to determine what to use during testing. Refer to requirements on the applicable service provider websites for detailed information.
- **Paper copies of mathematics formula sheets**—Schools may provide all grades 5–8 and grade 11 students taking the Mathematics MCA with paper versions of the current year’s formula sheets that are posted on PearsonAccess Next.
- **Paper copies of mathematics tables**—Schools may provide **eligible** students taking the Mathematics MCA with paper versions of the multiplication or hundreds tables that are posted on PearsonAccess Next. Refer to Chapter 4 for additional information.
- **Paper copies of translated word lists**—Schools may provide students taking the Mathematics and Science MCAs with paper versions of the current year’s translated word lists that are posted on PearsonAccess Next. Refer to Chapter 4 for additional information on which students may benefit from this support.
- **Stickers**—Stickers are included in test materials shipments for MCA paper test materials and are used by students to seal the test book segments after completion. If a district runs out of stickers, tape can be used instead. Note: District staff must break the sealed segments in order to enter student responses online after testing. Segments do not need to be re-sealed after data entry.
- **Scratch paper**—Schools may provide or allow scratch paper for the Reading, Listening, and Writing domains of ACCESS and for all MCA subjects. Scratch paper is not allowed for the Speaking domain of ACCESS. Table 26 provides guidelines for allowable scratch paper.
 - Students may draw lattices, diagrams (such as number lines), or charts on scratch paper if they choose, but examples cannot be displayed in the classroom or handed out during testing. Students may use scratch paper at their discretion, including folding it in sections themselves, but any direction or strategy for using scratch paper to answer questions must be handled prior to testing. Test Administrators or Test Monitors cannot prompt students to use it in any specific manner once testing has begun.
 - For paper MCA test books, students may use blank spaces in the test book to work on items and make notes. For the paper Mathematics MCA, they can also use the grid paper and formula sheets

provided in the mathematics test books. If students remove the grid paper or formula sheets from the test book, they must write their names on the sheets so that the materials can be accounted for and provided on subsequent days of testing, as needed. In addition, scratch paper as described in the bullet point above can be provided separately to students.

- Students must write their name on scratch paper, and Test Administrators and Test Monitors must treat scratch paper as secure test materials. It must be collected at the end of each testing session and securely disposed of following testing (no more than 2 business days after the close of the testing window). Requiring students to write their name on their scratch paper allows the Test Administrator/Test Monitor to ensure that they have accounted for scratch paper from all students. It also allows the scratch paper to be re-used on a subsequent day of testing, if the district chooses.

Table 26. Scratch Paper Guidelines

| Allowable Scratch Paper | Guidelines | Examples | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Blank paper | Lined notebook paper is acceptable but the paper must be blank. No boxes or numbers may be added to guide students to show their work, and paper may not be pre-folded into sections. Sticky notes are also allowed, but they must be provided as a pad and not strategically pre-arranged by the Test Monitor. | Not allowed:  | |
| Individual white- or blackboards | Must be blank before and after administration INFO! Must not contain pre-printed numbers, coordinates, or numbered boxes | N/A | |
| Commercially-produced graph paper | Must not contain numbers, coordinates, or numbered boxes | Allowed:  | Not Allowed:  |

| Allowable Scratch Paper | Guidelines | Examples | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-----------|------------------|----------|-------------------------------------|----------|--|------------|
| Paper copies of mathematics formula sheets | May be used if providing the current-year version to students from PearsonAccess Next | Allowed (example): <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px auto; width: fit-content;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Grade 5 Formula Sheet</p> <p style="text-align: center;">You may use the following formulas to solve problems on this test.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Formulas</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Variables</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>$A = b \times h$</td> <td>A = area</td> </tr> <tr> <td>$A = \frac{1}{2} \times b \times h$</td> <td>b = base</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>h = height</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </div> | Formulas | Variables | $A = b \times h$ | A = area | $A = \frac{1}{2} \times b \times h$ | b = base | | h = height |
| Formulas | Variables | | | | | | | | | |
| $A = b \times h$ | A = area | | | | | | | | | |
| $A = \frac{1}{2} \times b \times h$ | b = base | | | | | | | | | |
| | h = height | | | | | | | | | |
| Student testing tickets | May be used | Allowed (example): <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px auto; width: fit-content;"> <p style="text-align: center;">STUDENT TESTING TICKET</p> <p>Student Name: STUDENT, SARAH MARKS SID: 927399273992 Session: TINA GRADE 8 MATH Date of Birth: 01/02/2006 Test: Grade 08 Mathematics MCA</p> <p><small>You are authorized to take the electronic version of this test. You will be asked to provide the following information in order to access the test on the device. Please wait for the instructions from the test monitor before proceeding.</small></p> <p><small>Select Minnesota in the application.</small></p> <p><small>Username: 1391041748 Password: aB5e6</small></p> <p><small>Computer/device used: _____</small></p> </div> | | | | | | | | |

- **Other materials**—Depending on district policies, students may have water bottles, gum, snacks, etc. out during testing; in addition, any universal supports (such as highlighters, sensory tools) or accommodations are allowed as specified in Chapter 4.

Materials Not Allowed during Testing

It is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of what is not allowed during testing. Below are some common items that are not allowed. Refer to the applicable *Testing Directions* for a list of materials that are allowed for MCA test administrations; some students may also use additional materials as supports or accommodations (refer to Chapter 4). Unless the material is allowed according to one of these resources, students should remove or put away all other materials before test administration. MDE has the authority to invalidate student tests if the requirements outlined in this section are not followed.

- Dictionaries, thesauruses, and other reference materials, including text books, are not permitted (refer to word-to-word dual-language dictionary in Chapter 4 for a limited exception). Calculator manuals are not permitted.
- Students are not allowed to use or access cell phones or any other devices, including wearable technology, at any time during testing, including during breaks or when testing is completed (if students remain in the testing room). Follow district policies for ensuring students do not use cell phones or other devices. Refer to *Cell Phone and Device Policy* in Chapter 8 for more information.
- For ACCESS, use of scratch paper is not allowed for the Speaking domain. Based on guidance from WIDA, this is prohibited because writing a draft of spoken responses may compromise the validity of that domain; the test is meant to measure students’ ability to naturally respond to questions in English like they would when conversing with others in a classroom setting. The purpose is to measure students’ abilities to spontaneously retrieve, organize, and produce their *existing* knowledge of a given topic in English in a real-world setting where they would not be scripting out what they want to say.

- For ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, cover or remove all materials on walls and student desks that pertain to explicit language instruction or the language expectations of an academic content area. This includes any materials related to language forms or features as described in the [WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework, 2020 Edition](#) (WIDA > Teach > ELD Standards Framework). Even though a student’s content knowledge is not part of the language proficiency scoring, all materials that relate to the language expectations of an academic content area must be covered or removed. MDE does not have a list of materials that can remain visible to students during testing. If there is any doubt if a material is allowed, MDE recommends covering or removing the poster or graphic.
- For MCA and MTAS, all academic or instructional posters and graphics, including strategy techniques or methods, in the testing room or on a student’s desk must be covered or removed during test administration. This also includes academic or instructional information not related to the subject being tested (for example, science information must be covered even if reading is being tested).
 - MDE does not have a list of materials that can remain visible to students during testing. If there is any doubt if a material is allowed, MDE recommends covering or removing the poster or graphic.
 - This policy is required to ensure that students are answering items independently, without extra support or guidance that could be present in academic or instructional materials. For example, information in a historical poster about a scientist may provide an advantage for a reading passage or science scene; likewise, information on a mathematics concept may provide information that could be used to answer a science item.

Defining Staff Involved in Test Administration

The staff who are considered “involved” in test administration fall under a wide and comprehensive umbrella. Staff involved includes, but is not limited to, the following types of roles:

- Staff directly involved in test administration: District and School Assessment Coordinators, ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS Test Administrators, MCA Test Monitors, MTAS Test Administrators, interpreters, translators, scribes, paraprofessionals, staff receiving and organizing test materials, and technology staff, including any individuals contracted at the district for technology support.
- Staff indirectly involved with test administration: Individuals in leadership roles (such as principals, superintendents) and custodial and support staff if they have keys, and therefore access, to secure test materials.

All staff involved in test administration in any manner must complete all trainings for their role, as specified under *Training* later in this chapter. It is considered a security violation if untrained staff are involved in test administration.

Selecting Test Administrators and Test Monitors

All students must be assigned to a Test Administrator or Test Monitor who will administer the test, monitor the students, and maintain test security throughout test administration (refer to Chapter 3 for Test Administrator/Test Monitor roles and responsibilities). Test Administrators and Test Monitors must annually

complete all required trainings for their role, as specified under *Training* later in this chapter. Students cannot be left unsupervised at any time during testing.

Only trained staff involved in testing are allowed in the room during testing.

- In addition to Test Administrators and Test Monitors, any individuals in the room during test administration, like paraprofessionals, must complete required trainings each school year, including the *Test Security Training*. Specific training requirements are included in the notes for administration in Chapter 4 for staff involved in the administration of some universal supports and accommodations.
- Non-school personnel cannot be present in the testing room. However, they are allowed to be involved with testing in other capacities (for example, volunteers assisting as hall monitors) if they are directly supervised by school personnel. They must also complete the *Test Security Training*.
- Student teachers are allowed to be in the testing room during test administration because they are involved in daily instruction of students. They must complete required trainings for their role. However, student teachers cannot be the sole Test Administrator or Test Monitor, unless they hold a substitute teacher license (as substitute teachers are allowed to be Test Administrators/Test Monitors as specified below).
- A parent/guardian or relative cannot be involved with their student's test administration or be in the same room during testing at any time. For this policy, relatives are defined as children, stepchildren, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, siblings, in-laws, spouses, and persons under guardianship.
- Although trained by MDE, an MDE monitor conducting a site visit cannot be the sole adult in the room during testing; a trained district or school staff member must be present at all times during testing, including during site visits.

Test Administrators for ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS

For ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, Test Administrators should be selected using the criteria indicated below. Note: Even when a licensed teacher is required, the Test Administrator does not need to have EL licensure or be an EL teacher; however, a background in second language acquisition is recommended for the administration of some Speaking domains (ACCESS Paper grades 1–12), Kindergarten ACCESS, and WIDA Alternate ACCESS. Refer to the [Guidance on English Learner Instruction during ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Testing](#) for further information related to ensuring EL instruction continues during the testing window (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > English Learner Education).

- For the Kindergarten ACCESS, Test Administrators must be licensed teachers. It is strongly recommended that the Test Administrator is trained in second language acquisition because this background supports the scoring of the domains that the Test Administrator is required to do, and each of the test sections assesses multiple domains.

- For grades 1–12 of the ACCESS:
 - For ACCESS Online, the Test Administrator should be selected from the highest possible ranking from the list below. If a school has exhausted the availability of persons in category “1,” it should select staff in category “2,” and so on.
 1. Licensed teachers or administrators who work in the school
 2. Licensed teachers or administrators who work in the district
 3. Paraprofessionals who work in the school
 4. School district personnel employed by the school district
 5. Licensed substitute teachers
 - For ACCESS Paper:
 - Speaking domain: The Test Administrator must be a licensed teacher. It is strongly recommended that the Test Administrator for the Speaking domain is trained in second language acquisition because this background supports the scoring of the domain that the Test Administrator is required to do.
 - All other domains: The Test Administrator may be selected using the ranked criteria above.
- For the WIDA Alternate ACCESS, MDE strongly recommends that the Test Administrator is someone who is familiar with the student’s response mode, who works with the student during instruction, and with whom the student feels comfortable. If possible, it is best if the person who is familiar with the student is also a licensed teacher who is trained in second language acquisition because this background supports the scoring of the domains that the Test Administrator is required to do. In addition, typically only one Test Administrator is administering the entire test.

Test Monitors for MCA

Test Monitors should be selected from the highest possible ranking from the list below. If a school has exhausted the availability of persons in category “1,” it should select staff in category “2,” and so on.

1. Licensed teachers or administrators who work in the school
2. Licensed teachers or administrators who work in the district
3. Paraprofessionals who work in the school
4. School district personnel employed by the school district
5. Licensed substitute teachers

Test Administrators for MTAS

For MTAS, MDE strongly recommends that the Test Administrator be someone who is familiar with the student’s response mode, who works with the student during instruction, and with whom the student feels comfortable. If this is not possible, Test Administrators may be any district employee who has completed the applicable *MTAS Test Administrators* training in that academic year.

Communication about Test Administration

Districts are required to meet specific testing calendar requirements to provide information to students and families about all district testing, including statewide testing (refer to Chapter 6). This includes providing information about parent/guardian options for refusing testing when requested, as well as providing access to the refusal form (refer to Chapter 9). To encourage participation, districts may consider communicating information to students and families about the use and value of assessment results in the school and district, as well as how statewide assessments fit into the district’s balanced, comprehensive assessment system.

INFO! The [Students and Families Statewide Testing](#) section of the MDE website (MDE > Students and Families > Programs and Initiatives > Statewide Testing) has been redesigned and includes new information that may be provided to parents/guardians and students.

Student Resources for Testing

Districts must ensure that all students are familiar with the test that they will take. Each district determines which resources, if any, will be used and how they will be used. This decision may vary by school, grade, or student; based on students’ familiarity and experience with testing, the district may determine that no student resources are required. MDE does not specify which resources must be used. **INFO!** For some administrations, preparation may also be needed by the Test Administrator/Test Monitor who may be administering and scoring the assessment (Kindergarten ACCESS, WIDA Alternate ACCESS, and MTAS) or who may be administering a support or accommodation.



All students must be familiar with the test they will take. Each district determines which resources are used.

For ACCESS, districts should use the resources available on the [Preparing for ACCESS Testing](#) webpage (WIDA > Assess > ACCESS for ELLs > Preparing for ACCESS Testing).

- The following are additional recommendations for resources for ACCESS Online administrations:
 - For students who are new to taking the ACCESS Online, the test demo and practice test are recommended.
 - The **test demo** is available for each grade-level cluster to show students how to navigate different features of the test. It is recommended that students watch the test demo before taking the practice test.
 - The **practice test** can be used to familiarize students with the ACCESS test format. These items are very easy, but will help students become familiar with the test environment. Note that the practice test can also be used to familiarize students with accommodations that are embedded in the test (such as manual control of item audio, repeat item audio, and extended speaking response time).
 - For students who have experience taking the online ACCESS, the **sample items** are recommended. These items can be used to familiarize students with the content and grade-level appropriate

language development expectations, and they are representative of the item difficulty a student will experience on the actual test. It may be helpful to use students' ACCESS score reports from the previous year to focus on domains where they may need additional support.

- For students who will be testing using braille test materials, sample items and sample item user guides are available for download. In addition, each braille test kit includes sample items for the specified grade-level cluster and braille code.
- For all students, ensure they are familiar with how they will complete the Writing domain, as the response mode varies by grade band. Refer to *Test Administration Considerations for ACCESS* in Chapter 8 for more information.

For WIDA Alternate ACCESS, there is a [Quick Start Guide](#) available for educators (WIDA > Assess > Preparing to Administer WIDA Alternate ACCESS). The sample items are recommended for reviewing with students.

INFO! New sample items for the updated WIDA Alternate ACCESS will be posted prior to the opening of the testing window.

For MCA and MTAS, student resources are available on the [Student Readiness Tools](#) page of the PearsonAccess Next website under Preparing for Testing. **NEW!** For MCA, the Student Readiness Tools (SRTs) have replaced the items samplers and student tutorials as the resources used to familiarize students with the assessments they will be taking. To be prepared for statewide assessments, students need to be familiar with the test format and types of items, rather than the content, since they prepare for the content through daily instruction based on the academic standards. If students are comfortable with the format of the test they will be taking, then they are better prepared to demonstrate what they know and can do during the MCA.

Paper and online versions of the SRTs are updated annually, along with an educator's guide for each resource, to provide guidance and tips for educators using the SRTs with their students.

- For the online SRTs, students select their grade level to review instructional videos and then practice how to navigate within the test, how to use tools, and how to indicate answers for each item type. In addition, separate SRT resources for some supports and accommodations are available.
- For the paper SRTs, students use the SRT that matches the paper test materials they will use on the MCA. This will help familiarize the students with the look and feel of the paper test materials, as well as how to indicate answers for each item type. Available paper SRTs include 12-point regular print, 18- and 24-point large print, and mathematics and science scripts. Braille versions of the paper SRTs can be ordered from Pearson.
- [Stand-alone online calculators](#) (PearsonAccess Next > Preparing for Testing > Stand-Alone Calculators) and [formula sheets](#) (PearsonAccess Next > Preparing for Testing > Formula Sheets) for MCA are available so students can practice using them outside of the SRT.

For MTAS, sample Task Administration Manuals, Presentation Pages, and Response Option Cards are available to prepare both Test Administrators and students for test administration. Sample materials are also provided for the tasks being field tested for the upcoming Science and Reading Alternate MCA. SRTs for the new Alternate MCA will be available starting with science in 2024–25.

Training

This section provides detailed information about training requirements for staff involved in statewide testing.

The DAC is responsible for ensuring that all individuals who may be associated with any aspect of test administration or test content receive training on test administration and test security policies and procedures **each school year** prior to testing. It is considered a security violation if untrained staff are involved in testing in any way.

Remember, all staff members who are involved in test administration must be trained every year.



As described under *Defining Staff Involved in Test Administration* earlier in this chapter, involvement in test administration is not limited to administering tests, but also includes helping organize secure test materials, having keys (and therefore access) to areas where secure test materials are stored, preparing technology, or being present in the room during testing (for example, paraprofessionals). While all staff may not need the same level of training, any staff involved in test administration need to be aware of test security and what is allowed and not allowed.

MDE recommends that staff who only have access to the test results also complete the *Test Security Training*, as it covers educational data privacy laws and maintaining the integrity of the test results.

Each district determines their own timelines for when training must be completed in each school. While staff, like Test Monitors, must be trained before they administer or monitor tests, consider other test administration tasks that may occur earlier, like handling secure materials or preparing technology. In addition, some students may be testing earlier (for example, for ACCESS or earlier scheduled testing for a given grade), in which case earlier training would be needed in advance of when staff will be administering tests.

What is required for annual training will differ, and requirements by role are described below. However, as roles vary within each district, requirements may also vary. Districts may also require additional trainings that are above and beyond those required by MDE.

Accessing Trainings

The majority of the training resources described in the following sections are available online in service provider systems.

- The [Learning Management System \(LMS\)](#) is accessed from the PearsonAccess Next website and contains trainings and recordings of virtual training provided by MDE and Pearson (PearsonAccess Next > Resources & Training > Training). **NEW!** The LMS has replaced the Training Management System (TMS). Resources

for logging in to the LMS and registering an account are posted to the [PearsonAccess Next](#) website (PearsonAccess Next > Resources & Training > Training).

- The [WIDA Secure Portal](#) provides access to required training courses for ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, available under Assessment Training. DACs (or the designated staff person) must provide Test Administrators with logins and passwords for the WIDA Secure Portal to complete trainings.

Completion of trainings is tracked annually through the service providers' systems.

- In the LMS, DACs and users with the Assessment Administrator (AA) user role in PearsonAccess Next can track completion of trainings. The LMS can also be used to mark trainings completed as a group.
- In the WIDA Secure Portal, District and School Assessment Coordinators can track completion of trainings. Note: Only the completion of the training (which is based on passing the certification quiz) is shown and the specific modules completed are not available.

Training Documentation

Districts need to have documentation showing that each staff member involved in testing completed their required trainings, and each district decides what this documentation looks like (for example, training completion records from service provider systems, electronic documents, sign-in sheets with signatures, signed documents). However, the documentation must show completion for individual staff members; summary statements (such as, 30 staff members were trained) are not allowed. If the documentation is completed electronically (for example, collected in an online form), it must show or identify which individual staff members completed each training. While compiling a list of names into an internal spreadsheet is a valuable tool for a district to track training logistics, that spreadsheet itself does not constitute proof of completion, and individual completions must be documented (that is, a complete record of which trainings were completed by each staff member along with the date). **INFO!** Training documentation must include the date of the training and clearly note which training(s) were completed. For example, if a sign-in sheet is used, the sheet must indicate the training(s) completed (such as the *Test Security Training* and district policies and procedures) as well as the date of the training(s).

To ensure staff have completed all required trainings for their roles and to help track training documentation, districts should consider developing a staff list that identifies individual roles and the training required. Training documentation includes not only proof of completion for required trainings based on role, but also proof that staff received information or training on district-specific policies and procedures.

Documentation of completed training for each staff member must be kept on file for two years after the end of the academic school year in which testing took place.

- Training documentation must be provided as part of the Assessment Security Record (ASR) submission for each staff member who is involved with a security violation.
- DACs need to certify (in Test WES) that all staff have completed required trainings.
- Annually, MDE will request and review training documentation from a sampling of schools. Refer to *Monitoring and Audits* in Chapter 5.

Test Security Training

The *Test Security Training* is required each school year for all staff involved in testing. This training provides details on test security policies and procedures and includes the *Assurance of Test Security and Non-Disclosure*, which staff are also required to complete each school year to affirm that they understand their responsibilities related to test security and are committed to fulfilling them as required by their role in test administration.

Districts have three options for how staff will complete the *Test Security Training*:

- Have staff complete the training online individually
- Present the training in a group setting and have attendees review and sign the *Test Security Checklist*
- Have staff review and sign the *Test Security Checklist*

The district may use any combination of these options as long as all staff are trained and documentation for each individual staff member is maintained.

While some staff may feel that the content of the *Test Security Training* is not relevant to them, especially if they only have keys and access to test materials, MDE requires that the training and signing of the *Test Security Checklist* be completed each school year so all involved staff have a basic understanding of test security and data integrity and why it matters. Often, security violations are unintentional, resulting from a lack of awareness, and the training is intended to give staff a broad sense of what is and is not allowed.

Staff View the Training Online

For Test Monitors and Test Administrators, the *Test Security Training* is embedded in their required learning path as outlined in the next section. The *Test Security Training* is also available as a separate learning path for staff who are not required to complete other trainings in the LMS.

For documentation, DACs and staff with the AA user role in PearsonAccess Next can track training completion by staff using the reports available in the LMS. No other documentation is required for training completion.

Present the Training to Staff in a Group Setting

Districts may present the training in a group setting, navigating through it for all staff present. In order to ensure that staff are able to read and agree to the requirements outlined in the training, a paper copy of the *Test Security Checklist* must be provided to each attendee to sign. Districts may choose the method that works best to ensure that all staff have the ability to review the requirements outlined in the *Test Security Checklist*. This includes but is not limited to the following options:

- Printing off a copy of the *Test Security Checklist* for each staff member or sharing one copy of the *Test Security Checklist* with a separate sheet attached for signatures.
- Copying the *Test Security Checklist* into an electronic form (such as an online form) to track completion electronically. This is acceptable as long as the entire checklist (including the *Assurance*) is included and matches the current year version posted to PearsonAccess Next exactly. If the district adds any additional information, it must be clearly noted as district-specific content. If the checklist is completed electronically, the documentation must show or identify which individual staff members completed it.

Note that the MDE-provided *Test Security Training* must be completed by staff. Even if this training is completed as part of another group training (such as along with district policies and procedures training), this specific training must be used and cannot be replaced by a district training.

For documentation, the paper copies (or an electronic copy of the paper documents) showing the staff members present at the group training (such as sign-in sheets with signatures) and the *Test Security Checklists* that staff signed (using the option determined by the district) must be kept on file in case of a security violation. Keeping the copies signed by staff is required, even though the LMS allows DACs and users with the AA user role in PearsonAccess Next to mark trainings completed as a group. While this LMS functionality may allow districts better tracking of training completion, it does not capture the level of detail needed for a possible MDE investigation.

Staff Complete the Test Security Checklist

Districts may provide the paper *Test Security Checklist* to staff who would not otherwise be accessing the LMS or attending other trainings. The *Test Security Checklist* is also available in Hmong, Somali, and Spanish for staff who may need the checklist available in a language other than English. The checklist is available on [PearsonAccess Next](#) (under Resources & Training > Policies and Procedures); it is not included in the *Procedures Manual* as it is annually reviewed and revised after the manual's publication.

- MDE requires that the *Test Security Checklist* is signed.
- Districts may choose to copy the *Test Security Checklist* into an electronic form (such as an online form) to track completion electronically. This is acceptable as long as the entire checklist (including the *Assurance*) is included and matches the version posted to PearsonAccess Next exactly. If the district adds any additional information, it must be clearly noted as district-specific content. If the checklist is completed electronically, the documentation must show or identify which individual staff members completed it.

If the paper *Test Security Checklist* is completed, the paper copies signed by staff (or an electronic copy of the paper documents) must be kept on file in case of a security violation. Keeping the copies signed by staff is required, even though the LMS allows DACs and users with the AA user role in PearsonAccess Next to mark trainings completed as a group for staff who completed a paper checklist. While this LMS functionality may allow districts better tracking of training completion, it does not capture the level of detail needed for a possible MDE investigation.

Summary of Test Security Training Documentation Requirements

Table 27 provides a summary of the documentation DACs are required to maintain for the *Test Security Training* as outlined in this section.

Table 27. Test Security Training Documentation Summary

| Mode of Test Security Training | Documentation Required |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Staff Viewed Training Online | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Track completion through the LMS reports |
| Presented to Staff in Group Setting | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paper copies documenting who attended (for example, sign-in sheet with the participants' full name and signature)*• Paper copies of signed <i>Test Security Checklist</i> for each staff member, signature sheet of group copy of the <i>Checklist</i>,* or electronic documentation of individual completions for each staff member (via online form) |
| Staff Completed the Checklist | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paper copies of completed <i>Test Security Checklists</i>* or electronic documentation of individual completions for each staff member (via online form) |

*Electronic copies of the paper documents are also allowed.

District Policies and Procedures Training

While the *Test Security Training* addresses MDE policies and procedures for testing, each district has additional policies and procedures for test administration that must be communicated and followed. Because they are district-specific, it is the DAC's responsibility to identify these policies and procedures in the district test security procedure. Refer to *Required District Test Security Procedure* in Chapter 5 for further information. Each district determines how this information will be communicated to staff as appropriate for their role; for example, this may be through a district or school training or in writing (as an email, handout, etc.). For ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, district policies and procedures information or training needs to be provided to applicable staff before those administrations, in addition to policies and procedures that will be provided to staff later for MCA and MTAS.

Test-Specific Trainings

There are test-specific trainings required for ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS Test Administrators, MCA Test Monitors, and MTAS Test Administrators. These test-specific trainings must be completed each school year as outlined below, and are in addition to any district-provided trainings or resources on district policies and procedures for test administration. If staff are involved in different test administrations, they must complete the required trainings for each administration. However, they only need to complete a given training once each school year. DACs may also require other staff members, like School Assessment Coordinators or administrators, to complete any of these trainings to become familiar with the requirements for the staff in their buildings.

If there are additional staff members in the testing room, like paraprofessionals, the district must determine if test-specific trainings other than the *Test Security Training* are required. If the staff member is in the room only to assist a specific student, additional trainings may not be needed. However, if the staff member is serving as a second Test Monitor and may be assisting with the administration of the test, the applicable test-specific training should be completed.

ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS Test Administrators

All ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS Test Administrators complete the applicable courses (or modules within courses) and pass certification quizzes in the online WIDA Training Courses each school year prior to administration of any assessment. Certification quizzes contain different numbers of questions, and users will be told how many questions they must answer correctly in order to pass.

- From the WIDA Secure Portal, Test Administrators find and enroll in the applicable course(s).
- The courses are launched in the learning management system. Required courses/modules are listed in the following table, but other courses/modules may be reviewed as determined by the district.
- Note: The certification quizzes include multiple steps to document completion of training requirements. All steps in the certification quiz must be fulfilled in order for the course to show as completed.

Required MDE trainings in the LMS must also be completed once each school year. Note: Test Administrators who are giving more than one type of ACCESS test (for example, administering both ACCESS Online and Paper grades 1–12, or grades 1–12 and Kindergarten ACCESS) are required to complete multiple online WIDA Training Courses, but they are only required to complete any MDE-required trainings in the LMS once each school year. Refer to Table 28 for training requirements for ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS. **NEW!** The *Online ACCESS for ELLs: Administration* and *Paper ACCESS for ELLs: Administration* training courses have been updated to reflect changes in WIDA AMS and have been redesigned to be more user friendly and accessible. The *Alternate ACCESS: Administration and Scoring* training course has also been updated in preparation for the first year of the redesigned WIDA Alternate ACCESS.

Table 28. Training Requirements for ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS

| Test Administration | Trainings Required on WIDA Secure Portal under Assessment Training | Trainings Required in the LMS > ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS Tags |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Kindergarten ACCESS | <p><i>Kindergarten ACCESS for ELLs: Administration and Scoring</i> course</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All modules • Pass the certification quiz | <p><i>ACCESS Test Administrator—Kindergarten/WIDA Alternate ACCESS</i> learning path</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Test Security Training</i> |
| Grades 1–12 ACCESS Online | <p><i>Online ACCESS for ELLs: Administration</i> course*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All content in Module 1: <i>Introduction</i> • All content marked with a star symbol on the <i>Training Tasks</i> page • Pass the certification quiz | <p><i>ACCESS Test Administrator—Grades 1–12</i> learning path</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Test Security Training</i> • <i>Active Monitoring for Statewide Tests</i> |

| Test Administration | Trainings Required on WIDA Secure Portal under Assessment Training | Trainings Required in the LMS > ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS Tags |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Grades 1–12 ACCESS Paper | <p><i>Paper ACCESS for ELLs: Administration</i> course*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All content in Module 1: <i>Introduction</i> All content marked with a star symbol on the <i>Training Tasks</i> page Pass the certification quiz <p><i>Speaking for Grades 1–5: Scoring Paper ACCESS and WIDA Screener</i> course and/or <i>Speaking for Grades 6–12: Scoring Paper ACCESS and WIDA Screener</i> course</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All modules (including recommended practice) Pass the certification quiz | <p><i>ACCESS for ELLs Test Administrator—Grades 1–12</i> learning path</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Test Security Training</i> <i>Active Monitoring for Statewide Tests</i> |
| WIDA Alternate ACCESS | <p><i>Alternate ACCESS: Administration and Scoring</i> course</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All modules Pass the certification quiz | <p><i>ACCESS for ELLs Test Administrator—Kindergarten/WIDA Alternate ACCESS</i> learning path</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Test Security Training</i> |

*Note: The WIDA grades 1–12 *Online* and *Paper ACCESS for ELLs: Administration* courses include numerous pages that explain tasks typically completed by District or School Assessment Coordinators. Only Module 1, *Introduction* (all content), and all content marked with a star symbol on the *Training Tasks* are required by MDE for Test Administrators. These pages address all domains and grade clusters of the ACCESS and covers all of the content required to pass the certification quiz.

MCA Test Monitors

For MCA Test Monitors, the *MCA Test Monitor* learning path includes three required trainings. The *Administering the MCA* training includes three options: administering online assessments only, administering paper assessments only, or administering both paper and online assessments. Test Monitors must select the one option that best fits their role in order to complete the training.

Table 29. Training Requirements for MCA Test Monitors

| Test Administration | Trainings Required in the LMS > MCA Tags > MCA Test Monitor Learning Path |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| MCA | <p><i>MCA Test Monitor</i> learning path:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Test Security Training</i> • <i>Active Monitoring for Statewide Tests</i> • <i>Administering the MCA</i> |

MTAS Test Administrators

MTAS Test Administrators must complete the applicable learning path in the LMS based on their years of experience administering the MTAS, as outlined in Table 30 below. Test Administrators only need to complete one of the learning paths depending on their experience administering MTAS.

Table 30. Training Requirements for MTAS Test Administrators

| Number of Years as Test Administrator | Trainings Required in the LMS > MTAS Tags |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| First or second year administering MTAS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>New MTAS Test Administrator—1–2 years</i> learning path <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Test Security Training</i> ○ <i>MTAS Administration Overview</i> ○ <i>MTAS Administration and Scoring Practice</i> |
| Three or more years administering MTAS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Experienced MTAS Test Administrator—3 or more years</i> learning path <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Test Security Training</i> ○ <i>MTAS Administration and Scoring Practice</i> |

Additional Training Resources for Staff

INFO! In addition to required trainings, each learning path outlined above contains optional trainings related to specific test administration tasks (such as managing MCA test sessions and entering MTAS score data) and other are more related to specific responsibilities (such as handling secure test materials and determining MCA universal support and accommodations) that DACs can require staff to complete as needed.

Training Resources for District Assessment Coordinators

In addition to the resources listed above, MDE and service providers offer training opportunities specifically for DACs throughout the year via live virtual trainings and in-person trainings. The weekly *Assessment Update* provides detailed information on trainings as they are offered or available.

For new DACs, a series of trainings addresses roles, responsibilities, and upcoming tasks throughout the year. These trainings include a New DAC Orientation in the fall, monthly Q&A sessions throughout the school year, and online New DAC trainings. These trainings, which are available in the LMS, include information on scheduling testing, training requirements, district policies and procedures, and student precode files. **NEW!** In addition, a training specific to monitoring and audits has been added. The [District Assessment Coordinator Trainings and Q&A Sessions](#) document outlines training opportunities provided by MDE (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > District Resources (under the District Assessment Coordinator expandable heading)).

It is the DAC's responsibility to review applicable MDE training resources and attend MDE trainings specific to test security and test administration each school year. The following are required in order for DACs to be considered trained:

- Review the weekly *Assessment Update* emails; these emails are also posted each week to the [PearsonAccess Next](#) website (PearsonAccess Next > MDE Updates > Assessment Updates).
- Review the current version of this *Procedures Manual*.
 - New DACs should review the entire manual.
 - Experienced DACs should minimally review new or clarified information and review complete chapters as needed.
- Complete the [Test Security Training](#) (PearsonAccess Next > Resources & Training > Training).
 - Note: If the district hires a new DAC (or another person working closely with testing in a similar position) over the summer when MDE online trainings have been removed for updating, MDE recommends using the [Test Security Checklist](#) to provide basic information about test security before the updated training is available for the current year (PearsonAccess Next > Resources & Training > Policies and Procedures).
- Attend (or watch the recording of) the MDE Test Administration Training. MDE tracks completion of the training through the LMS.

As part of the staff training certification in Test WES, DACs must certify that they will complete all required DAC trainings and review all required resources. If there is a security violation, training documentation will be requested by MDE.

Though not required, MDE recommends that DACs review trainings that are required for other staff for both English language proficiency and standards-based accountability assessments so they are familiar with the information addressed and can support staff who may have questions.

DACs can use any of the training resources from MDE or service provider trainings to create training materials for the district or to provide to district staff to view or read.

Summary of Training Requirements

Table 31 outlines the MDE-required trainings discussed in this section that must be completed each school year. Districts may require that staff complete other trainings, or staff may be required to complete trainings for

multiple roles (for example, if they are administering both ACCESS and MCA). Email mde.testing@state.mn.us for an electronic version of this table that can be customized per district specifications if needed.

Table 31. Annual Training Requirements for Statewide Assessments

| Role | Training Requirements |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| District Assessment Coordinator | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review <i>Procedures Manual</i> • Review weekly <i>Assessment Updates</i> • <i>Test Security Training</i> • MDE DAC Test Administration Training (in-person, virtual, or recording) |
| School Assessment Coordinators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Test Security Training</i> • Other district-required trainings • District-specific policy and procedures training/information |
| Other staff involved in testing and/or who have access to secure test materials but are not Test Monitors/ Test Administrators ¹⁰ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Test Security Training</i> • District-specific policy and procedures training/information |
| Kindergarten ACCESS Test Administrator | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Kindergarten ACCESS for ELLs: Administration and Scoring</i> course <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All modules ○ Pass the certification quiz • <i>ACCESS for ELLs Test Administrator—Kindergarten/WIDA Alternate ACCESS</i> learning path <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Test Security Training</i> • District-specific policy and procedures training/information |
| Grades 1–12 ACCESS Online Test Administrator | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Online ACCESS for ELLs: Administration</i> course <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Module 1: <i>Introduction</i> ○ All content marked with a star symbol on the <i>Training Tasks</i> ○ Pass the certification quiz • <i>ACCESS Test Administrator—Grades 1–12</i> learning path <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Test Security Training</i> ○ <i>Active Monitoring for Statewide Tests</i> • District-specific policy and procedures training/information |

¹⁰ This includes all staff who are involved in any aspect of testing, including technology staff, office staff, staff providing assistance, administrators, and custodians who have keys and access to test materials.

| Role | Training Requirements |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Grades 1–12 ACCESS Paper Test Administrator | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Paper ACCESS for ELLs: Administration</i> course <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Module 1: <i>Introduction</i> ○ All content marked with a star symbol on the <i>Training Tasks</i> ○ Pass the certification quiz • <i>Speaking for Grades 1–5: Scoring Paper ACCESS and WIDA Screener</i> course and/or <i>Speaking for Grades 6–12: Scoring Paper ACCESS and WIDA Screener</i> course <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All modules (including recommended practice) ○ Pass the certification quiz • <i>ACCESS Test Administrator—Grades 1–12</i> learning path <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Test Security Training</i> ○ <i>Active Monitoring for Statewide Tests</i> • District-specific policy and procedures training/information |
| WIDA Alternate ACCESS Test Administrator | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Alternate ACCESS for ELLs: Administration and Scoring</i> course <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All modules ○ Pass the certification quiz • <i>ACCESS Test Administrator—Kindergarten/ WIDA Alternate ACCESS</i> learning path <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Test Security Training</i> • District-specific policy and procedures training/information |
| Test Monitors for MCA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>MCA Test Monitor</i> learning path <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Test Security Training</i> ○ <i>Active Monitoring for Statewide Tests</i> ○ <i>Administering the MCA</i> • District-specific policy and procedures training/information |
| MTAS Test Administrators (first or second year administering) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>New MTAS Test Administrator—1–2 years</i> learning path <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Test Security Training</i> ○ <i>MTAS Administration Overview</i> ○ <i>MTAS Administration and Scoring Practice</i> • District-specific policy and procedures training/information |
| MTAS Test Administrators (three or more years administering) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Experienced MTAS Test Administrator—3 or more years</i> learning path <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Test Security Training</i> ○ <i>MTAS Administration and Scoring Practice</i> • District-specific policy and procedures training/information |

Chapter 8 — Test Administration

Overview

This chapter contains information on the policies and procedures related to administering statewide assessments.

- For detailed information on administering the ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, refer to the *ACCESS for ELLs Checklist* on the [Minnesota](#) page of the WIDA website (WIDA > Minnesota [under Member/State Pages dropdown at the top of the page]) and the *Test Coordinator Manual* and *Test Administrator Manual* in the [WIDA Secure Portal](#).
- For detailed information on administering the MCA and MTAS, refer to the [User Guides](#) page of the PearsonAccess Next website (PearsonAccess Next > Resources & Training > User Guides) and the applicable [Testing Directions](#) (PearsonAccess Next > Preparing for Testing > Testing Directions).

Note: All statewide assessments must be administered in person and at school; there are no remote administration options available for any assessments.

Tracking Secure Test Materials Provided to Students

Each district determines its own procedures for keeping test materials secure for all assessments (ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS and MCA/MTAS) and documents the necessary steps in their district's test security procedure (refer to Chapter 5 for additional information).

Secure test materials for online tests include student testing tickets (because they provide access to tests and contain private student data), and after testing has begun, student scratch paper (because students may have written test items on it). Additionally for MCA, all paper materials provided to students (including mathematics formula sheets, mathematics tables, or translated word lists) must be treated as secure materials after testing has begun since students may have used them as scratch paper.

- Student testing tickets and any materials used as scratch paper must contain the student's name and be collected at the end of each testing session before students leave the testing room. Requiring students to write their name on these materials allows the Test Administrator/Test Monitor to ensure that they have accounted for scratch paper and other materials from all students. It also allows the materials to be reused on subsequent days of testing, if the district chooses.
- Testing may be scheduled over multiple days, and these materials must be kept secure between testing sessions following the district's policies (for example, Test Monitors secure materials in a locked drawer or cabinet, or Test Monitors return materials to the District or School Assessment Coordinator between testing sessions).

Districts also need to consider how student testing tickets are provided to staff, especially if electronic copies are shared. Since student testing tickets provide access to secure test content and include private student data, districts should first consider their district policies for how private student data is shared, and whether sharing

electronically is allowed. If sharing electronically is allowed under district policies, districts should consider additional measures if they:

- Send student testing tickets to Test Administrators or Test Monitors via email. In this case, districts should consider including reminders to staff that testing tickets are secure and should be accessed only by authorized staff for test administration or data entry, and then be deleted following test administration.
- Save student testing tickets as electronic files in a secure shared folder to which multiple staff have access. Districts should consider limiting who has access to the folder, if possible, and ensure testing tickets are deleted following test administration.

Student testing tickets and login information should not be emailed to MDE. If information needs to be provided to MDE (for a test administration situation or a security violation), only the student MARSS/SSID number should be provided via email.

Districts must keep paper test materials secure at all times and track them from receipt until they are returned to the respective service provider. The security checklists, which are included in the test materials shipments, are used for this purpose. Each district determines how it will use the security checklists to track secure test materials. Assessment Coordinators and Test Administrators/Test Monitors can use the *Test Materials Assigned to Students Checklist* (available in Appendix A) to assign materials to students. For MCA and MTAS, districts also have access to similar versions of security checklists in PearsonAccess Next once test materials have shipped.

Districts should ensure that all applicable test materials (such as student testing tickets, paper test books, and scratch paper) have been organized by Test Administrator or Test Monitor for each student at least one day before test administration. Be sure to maintain security by following all test security procedures throughout administration.

Verifying and Correcting Student Information for Testing

Student information that is loaded into the service provider systems may include a student's name, grade, MARSS/SSID number, and birth date, as well as district and school information. This information appears in the service provider systems for online tests and is also preprinted on student labels for ACCESS Paper test booklets. **Never allow a student to take an online test assigned to another student; never provide a student with an ACCESS Paper booklet that has another student's label on it. This will result in test scores being attributed to the wrong student.**

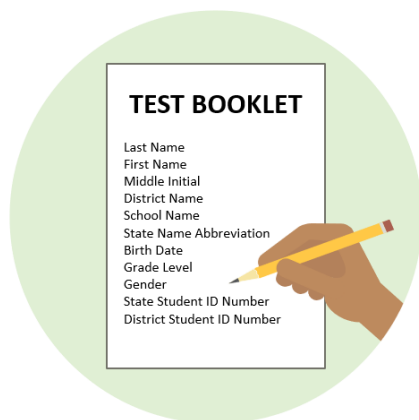
ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS Administrations

In December, MDE sends one precode file with English learner enrollment information to DRC. After this initial precode file is sent, districts must add newly enrolled or newly identified English learners directly into WIDA AMS. When adding students, ensure all student information entered matches student enrollment data, including student MARSS/SSID numbers in the field labeled State Student ID. Although not required in WIDA AMS, ensure correct date of birth and gender information are entered to decrease discrepancies in Test WES during Posttest Editing. Prior to testing, District Assessment Coordinators (DACs) should verify that all English learners are loaded into WIDA AMS.

For Kindergarten ACCESS, WIDA Alternate ACCESS, ACCESS Paper test materials, and the Writing domain test booklets for ACCESS Online, verify the student information on preprinted labels prior to applying them to the test booklet. If a preprinted label is incorrect, the label may still be used but the information should be corrected in WIDA AMS. Any changes to student information in WIDA AMS will override information from the preprinted label.

If a student needs to test but did not receive a preprinted label, a District/School label must be used and the student's demographic information indicated on the test booklet in pencil. Both the front and back of the test booklet contain several student demographic information fields, but not all data fields are required. For Minnesota, only the following student information is required, and this Minnesota-specific guidance replaces the information provided by WIDA and DRC. Ensure the information indicated matches student enrollment data:

- Last Name
- First Name
- Middle Initial
- District Name
- School Name
- State Name Abbreviation
- Birth Date (MM/DD/YYYY)
- Grade Level
- Gender
- State Student ID Number (MARSS/SSID number)
- District Student ID Number (MARSS local use number, if used in the district)



If a student did not receive a preprinted label, then the information needs to be indicated on the test booklet in pencil.



The Date of Testing field is optional; the date the test was completed for the student may be indicated in situations where the student has left the district and did not complete all four domains.

For all ACCESS Paper test materials, confirm that there are no additional markings or bubbled information on the test booklets. Inadvertent markings and/or incorrect bubbling by students can affect how the test booklet is scanned and scored (for example, if the incorrect grade is bubbled, the student's test may not be scored correctly).

NEW! The updated WIDA Alternate ACCESS contains an Individual Characteristics Questionnaire (ICQ). ICQ information will be reported on the individual student score report to help educators make reclassification decisions about students taking WIDA Alternate ACCESS. The ICQ will be available on the WIDA website for

education teams to complete collaboratively prior to their testing window. MDE recommends that educators complete the entire ICQ for each student participating in the WIDA Alternate ACCESS.

MCA and MTAS Administrations

For online testing and data entry, DACs must verify that each student is eligible for the subject and test expected.

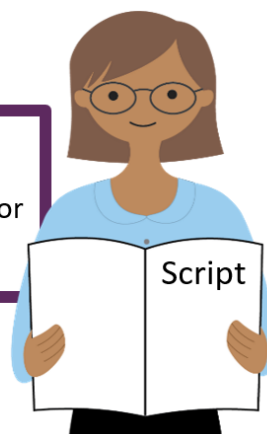
- MDE sends student information to Pearson in nightly precode files. Districts cannot manually add students or edit student information directly in PearsonAccess Next. If changes are needed, districts must update the student enrollment information submitted to MDE or use Precode Student Eligibility in Test WES (refer to Chapter 6 for more information).
- Student information submitted in enrollment data will typically be reflected in PearsonAccess Next in two business days; students manually updated in Precode Student Eligibility in Test WES will typically be visible in PearsonAccess Next the next business day.
- It is recommended that districts confirm that all students who will test are listed in the test session at least 1–2 days before testing.

Many districts use a student information system to view and manage student data. Keep in mind that this data in the district’s system is not necessarily the same information that has been submitted to MDE through MARSS A/B files. If there are discrepancies, use available comparison reports to compare the data submitted through MARSS A/B files and synced with Ed-Fi, as Ed-Fi data is synced directly from the district student information system.

Directions During Testing

In order for assessment results to reflect what Minnesota students know and can do, the administration of the statewide tests should be as standardized as possible, both between schools within districts and between districts throughout the state. For this reason, it is imperative that all Test Administrators and Test Monitors are familiar with and use the applicable directions throughout test administration, especially any scripted instructions that must be read to students. While this section provides an overview of the directions for each test, refer to *What Help Can Test Administrators and Test Monitors Give to Students* later in this chapter for more information on their use during testing.

Using testing directions ensures that tests are administered the same way for all students across the state.



ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS

For ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, the scripted instructions for students and the guidance for Test Administrators are in the *Test Administrator’s Scripts* provided by WIDA. The applicable *Test Administrator’s Scripts* are automatically included in the initial test materials shipment and may be ordered during additional orders in WIDA AMS as needed. The grades 4–12 *Test Administrator’s Script* is also available in the [WIDA Secure Portal](#). These scripted instructions must be read to students for every test administration.

The *Test Administrator’s Scripts* are considered secure materials for Kindergarten ACCESS, ACCESS Paper grades 1–12, ACCESS Online grades 1–3, and WIDA Alternate ACCESS because some test content is also included in the scripts. Test Administrators must keep these scripts secure when preparing for and throughout test administration and return them with secure test materials.

The *Test Administrator’s Script* for ACCESS Online grades 4–12 is not secure as it contains only general guidance by domain and includes no test content. Districts may choose to allow Test Administrators to access the grades 4–12 *Test Administrator’s Scripts* electronically during test sessions, rather than using a printed copy. If accessed on an electronic device, Test Administrators must follow MDE and district policies regarding device use during testing (for example, not checking email or using the device for other work during testing).

MCA and MTAS

MCA testing directions have two components: 1) directions that students receive in their test and 2) directions Test Monitors use to guide and support students. These components are described in more detail in the following sections. MTAS does not have a separate directions component since all instructions for the Test Administrator and the student are part of the scripted instructions in the Task Administration Manual.

Testing Directions for MCA

There are two versions of the *MCA Testing Directions*, *Testing Directions: Online* for online administrations and *Testing Directions: Paper* for paper administrations.

The *Testing Directions* contain no test content and are not secure. They are updated annually and posted on the [Testing Directions](#) page of the PearsonAccess Next website (PearsonAccess Next > Preparing for Testing > Testing Directions). Both versions of the *Testing Directions* are also posted in Hmong, Somali, and Spanish for Test Monitors to provide translated directions to students as an available universal support; however, only the portions read aloud to students are translated.

In addition to being posted on the PearsonAccess Next website, the *Testing Directions: Paper* are also included along with the initial test materials shipment (if paper test materials are sent) and are available in additional orders. Likewise, the *Testing Directions: Online* are available in additional orders (at a quantity of one copy per every 30 students).

The *Testing Directions* contain the following sections:

- *Script to Read to Students*: Separate sets of scripted instructions to use for the first day of testing for a subject and for subsequent days of testing.

- *Answering Questions and Providing Assistance*: Information and guidance on what assistance may be provided by Test Monitors and how to address student questions during testing. (Note: Refer to *What Help Can Test Monitors Give to Students* later in this chapter for more information on policies related to providing assistance.)
- *Test Monitor Checklist*: A checklist of test administration tasks for Test Monitors to use for reference.
- *Detailed Information*: Information for Test Monitors about policies and procedures for test administration.
- A transcript of the student directions (for online administrations) or information about entering student responses online (for paper administrations).

There are two sections of the *Testing Directions* that must be provided to Test Monitors and used for every test administration: *Script to Read to Students* and *Answering Questions and Providing Assistance*. **INFO!** For online administration, the transcript of the student directions must also be provided so that Test Monitors may repeat any of those scripted instructions as needed. These sections must be provided in their entirety, and no portion of the scripted instructions can be removed. Districts may work with Test Monitors prior to testing to determine what will be said for the open portions that districts fill in (such as details on how testing is scheduled). This information can be communicated to Test Monitors through training or entered in the fillable fields available in the versions posted online before the directions are provided to Test Monitors.



All Test Monitors must use the *Script to Read to Students* and *Answering Questions and Providing Assistance* sections for every test administration. For online administrations, Test Monitors must also have the transcript of the student directions available.

Otherwise, districts are not required to provide the other sections of the *Testing Directions* to Test Monitors. Districts can decide which other reference information they will provide (such as only portions of the checklist or detailed information) and how they will present it (for example, as detailed information in a district training on policies and procedures or as a physical checklist).

Districts may also allow Test Monitors to access the *Testing Directions* electronically during test sessions, rather than using a printed copy. If accessed on an electronic device, Test Monitors must follow MDE and district policies regarding device use (such as not checking email or using the device for other work during testing).

Student Directions for MCA

For the online MCA, students review directions when they first sign in to each of their tests. Text-to-speech directions are available for all subjects, including the Reading MCA. The *Testing Directions: Online* contains a transcript of the student directions; Test Monitors may use this transcript to repeat directions to students as needed, but they should not read directions from the student's screen.

For MCA paper administrations, student directions appear at the front of the test book and are included in the *Testing Directions: Paper*.

Calculator Use

All MCA and MTAS test items can be solved in a variety of ways, and therefore calculators are not required. However, they may be used to answer items when a calculator is allowed. General guidelines on calculator usage, allowable and prohibited handheld calculators, and the handheld calculator memory clearing policy are available in Appendix B, which can be provided to staff as needed. Students must be familiar with any calculator they will be using prior to test administration.

Calculator Use with Online Tests

This section addresses the use of calculators on the Mathematics and Science MCAs. These tests have an online calculator tool available; refer to Table 32 for information on the type of online calculator available.

- For the online grades 3–8 Mathematics MCA, calculator and non-calculator items are divided into different groups, and the online calculator is available only in groups of items where a calculator is allowed. On the grades 3–8 Mathematics MCA, students **can only use the online calculator provided in TestNav**. Use of a handheld calculator by a student on the online grades 3–8 Mathematics MCA invalidates the assessment. If a student’s IEP or 504 plan states that a handheld calculator must be used, the student must take the test using a paper test book (refer to Chapter 4 for further information).
- For the online grade 11 Mathematics MCA, a calculator can be used for the entire test since there are no non-calculator items. An online calculator is available in TestNav, and a handheld calculator may be used instead of or alongside the online calculator. Refer to Appendix B for requirements related to the use of handheld calculators, specifically the policy for clearing calculator memory.
- For the online Science MCA, only a few items may ask the student to complete simple mathematical computations. An online calculator is available in TestNav, and any type of handheld calculator may be used instead of or alongside the online calculator. Refer to Appendix B for requirements related to the use of handheld calculators, specifically the policy for clearing calculator memory.

Table 32. Calculator Use for Online Assessments

| Test | Type of Online Calculator in TestNav | Can Handheld be Used? | Notes |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Online Grades 3–8 Mathematics MCA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grades 3–5: Basic (TI-108™) • Grades 6–7: Scientific (TI-30XS™) • Grade 8: Graphing (TI-84 Plus CE™) | No | The online calculator is available in TestNav when calculator use is allowed. If an IEP or 504 plan states that a handheld calculator must be used, a paper test book must be used. |

| Test | Type of Online Calculator in TestNav | Can Handheld be Used? | Notes |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Online Grade 11 Mathematics MCA | Graphing (TI-84 Plus CE™) | Yes | The online calculator in TestNav is available throughout the entire test. A handheld graphing calculator can be used instead of or alongside the online calculator. |
| Online Science MCA | Basic (TI-108™) | Yes | The online calculator in TestNav is available for items that may ask the student to complete simple mathematical computations. Any type of handheld calculator can be used instead of or alongside the online calculator. |

Calculator Use with Paper Test Materials and MTAS

This section addresses using a calculator with paper test materials, including paper test materials for the Mathematics and Science MCAs and Mathematics and Science MTAS. Refer to Table 33 for the type of calculator required for each grade and subject.

- For grades 3–8 Mathematics MCA paper test materials, a handheld calculator is allowed, except for the non-calculator segment in grades 3–8 (Segment 1). Any student who does not follow directions and uses a calculator for any items in Segment 1 (the non-calculator segment) will have their test invalidated because the assessment no longer measures what was intended.
- For grade 11 Mathematics MCA paper test materials, a handheld calculator is allowed in all segments of the test since there are no non-calculator items.
- For Science MCA paper test materials, some items may ask the student to complete simple mathematical calculations, and a handheld calculator may be used for these items. Since these types of items are not included on the science test each year, the item will indicate whether a calculator can be used.
- For Mathematics and Science MTAS, four-function calculators or any alternative device or system that the student uses as a proxy calculator may be used on any task. Some examples include:
 - Assistive technology devices
 - Mathematics manipulatives
 - Multiplication and hundreds tables
 - Number line
 - Number grid with smaller ranges of numbers than a hundreds table
 - Abacus

Table 33 specifies which type of handheld calculator may be used by grade for paper administrations of the Mathematics MCA. Using a more technologically-advanced calculator than the one specified provides assistance that invalidates what is being assessed (for example, using a scientific calculator instead of a four-function calculator for grade 5). Using a less technologically-advanced calculator than the type specified (for example, using a four-function calculator instead of a graphing calculator for grade 8) is allowed but not recommended as students do not have the same access to additional functions the more advanced calculator provides.

For paper administrations of the Science MCA, any type of handheld calculator that meets the allowable requirements may be used. Because these items require only simple mathematical computations, using a more or less technologically-advanced calculator does not invalidate what is being assessed. Refer to Appendix B for additional information on allowable and prohibited handheld calculators.

Table 33. Calculator Type Required for Paper MCAs

| Test | Type of Calculator Required |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Paper Grades 3–5 Mathematics MCA | Standard or four function |
| Paper Grades 6–7 Mathematics MCA | Scientific |
| Paper Grades 8 and 11 Mathematics MCA | Graphing |
| Paper Science MCA | Any (standard or four function calculators are all that is required; however, scientific or graphing calculators are also allowed) |

General Test Administration Considerations

General Test Administration Procedures

Ensuring Students Are Ready

While each district determines their testing schedule within the testing window, there should be a process in place for ensuring that students are fully prepared to test. This means that students are not only provided any accommodations or supports that they require, but that they also have any necessary aids (such as glasses or hearing aids) when they are to begin testing. If a student does not have required aids and/or has another extenuating circumstance that has arisen (such as medication not taken, traumatic event), testing should be rescheduled. It is preferable to test a student on a makeup day rather than to proceed with testing as scheduled in these situations.

Tracking the Adults in Testing Rooms

Districts must have a process for tracking which students test with which Test Monitors or Test Administrators, as well as any other adult(s) who are present in the testing room (such as staff providing assistance, paraprofessionals). This applies to each test session (initial administration and any makeup test sessions)

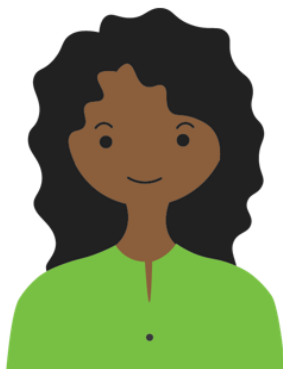
for both the standards-based and the English language proficiency accountability assessments. Districts must keep this documentation on file at the district for two years after the end of the academic school year in which testing took place, and it must be available upon request for MDE audits, monitoring, or test security investigations. Note: The process must also include any monitors present in the testing room (such as the DAC conducting observations in the district, or an MDE monitor during a site visit).

Students Identification

A student must be known to the Test Administrator or Test Monitor in order to test. When students are unfamiliar to the Test Administrator or Test Monitor (for example, Test Monitors for online schools), the Test Administrator or Test Monitor should ask for a picture ID, or another method as determined by the district, to verify each student’s identity and that each student is taking the correct test.

Determining Sign-In Process

Districts must decide the process for signing students into the online MCA or ACCESS. Some districts may have students sign themselves in, while others may sign students in before their arrival at the computer lab or testing room. Decisions will likely be based on the age of the students and their experience with the computers or devices they are using. Once signed in, students should verify that their name appears and must start or resume the test themselves so that test content is not exposed on their screen. Note: Ensure Test Administrators and Test Monitors distribute the correct test tickets to students and that each student verifies they are signing in with the correct information.



Students signing in with the wrong testing ticket is a common misadministration. This is a key reminder to include in your district training.

Test Administration Considerations for ACCESS

For ACCESS Online grades 1–12, student information sent in the MDE precode file automatically places students into generic tests sessions in WIDA AMS based on grade cluster and domain. **INFO!** WIDA AMS now refers to test sessions as registrations. These terms are interchangeable. For clarity, the *Procedures Manual* will continue to refer to test sessions. Districts do not need to edit the test sessions unless a student needs to be changed to a different one. Note: Districts may want to consider removing students from the generic sessions who will not be testing online (for example, students taking the WIDA Alternate ACCESS or ACCESS Paper or students who will not be testing due to a parent/guardian refusal) and placing them in a “Not Testing” session. This helps to ensure these students are not tested.

Student rosters for test sessions may be printed and provided to Test Administrators. Student test tickets contain student login information and are provided for each domain; these tickets must be printed and given to students to sign themselves into each test (or for staff to sign students in, depending on the district process). Printed test tickets contain private student information and provide access to the online tests, and therefore must be kept secure. Note: If districts choose to create their own sessions, ensure students in grades 4–12 are put in the correct session for the Writing domain (handwriting or keyboarding).

After Hours Testing

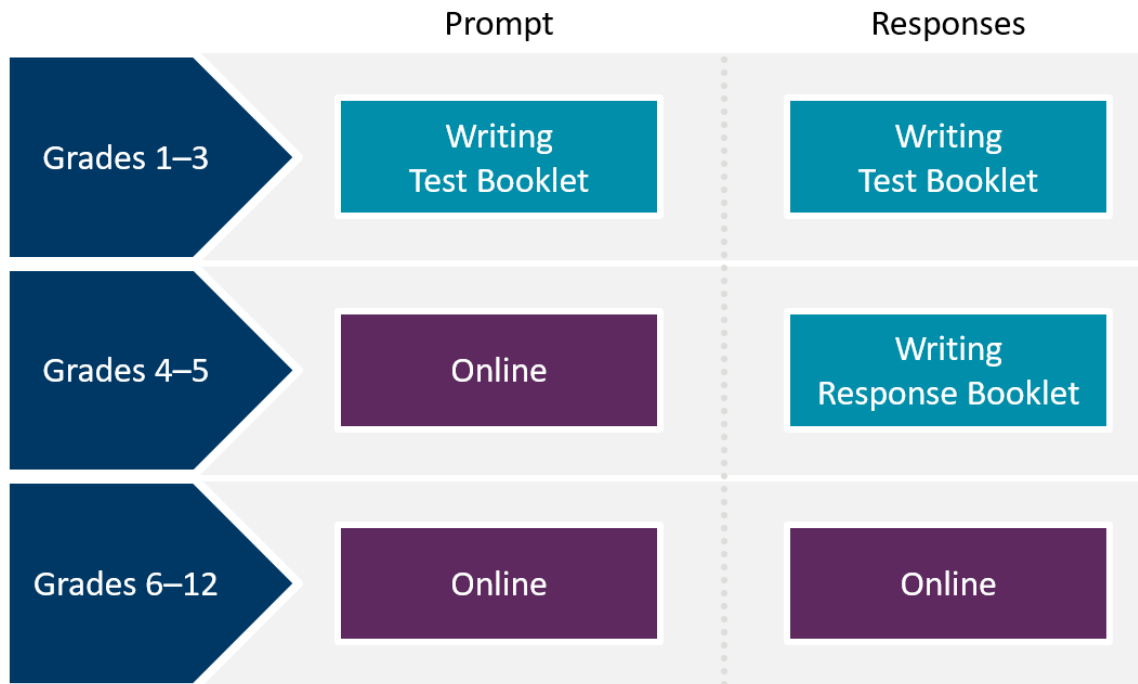
For test security purposes, districts should administer tests to students within limited weekday hours (6 a.m. to 5 p.m.). If the district needs to test students outside of these hours/days, the DAC must contact mde.testing@state.mn.us at least two business days in advance and provide the rationale for the extended hours, along with the dates and times of the planned test administrations. MDE will review the rationale and determine if an exception is allowed.

Writing Domain Considerations

While the ACCESS Online for grades 1–12 is primarily administered to students on a testing device, provisions for the Writing domain are as follows:

- The ACCESS Online Writing test for students in grades 1–3 is administered entirely in paper format. Students will read prompts and write their responses in a Writing test booklet. There is no option to complete this test online.
- The ACCESS Online Writing test for students in grades 4–5 presents prompts to students online but, by default, students respond in a Writing response booklet.
 - If students in grades 4–5 are competent at keyboarding and wish to respond online, districts can move these students into a keyboarding test session. This decision must be made on an individual student basis, in conjunction with the student, and prior to the student attempting to test.
- The ACCESS Online Writing test for students in grades 6–12 is entirely online and students will keyboard their response.
 - Students in grades 6–12 who are inexperienced, unfamiliar, or uncomfortable with keyboarding may handwrite their responses in a Writing response booklet. This decision must be made on an individual student basis, in conjunction with the student, and prior to the student attempting to test.
 - Students who need to handwrite their responses must be moved to a handwriting test session in WIDA AMS prior to testing.

Figure 11: Default Writing Modes for the ACCESS Online



Note: Placing grade 4–12 students in the wrong session (keyboarding or handwriting) for their Writing domain is a common misadministration. Before beginning any ACCESS Online Writing for students in grades 4–12, verify that students are assigned to the session in WIDA AMS that aligns with their response mode. In addition, the Test Administrator must ensure that the student is familiar with how they will provide their responses. A common misadministrations for the ACCESS Online Writing test occurs when students in grades 4–5 are not provided the Writing response booklet or do not know how to provide their responses, since they are viewing the prompts online. The grades 4–12 *Test Administrator’s Script* includes instructions for Test Administrators to ensure the test is administered correctly.

Note: The Writing test booklet (for students in grades 1–3) and the Writing response booklet (for students in grades 4–12) used for the ACCESS Online are different than the student response booklets used for the ACCESS Paper. Ensure that the paper administration test booklet is not used for an online writing administration.

Paper Administration Considerations

Paper administrations of the entire ACCESS test are available as an accommodation for English learners with an IEP or 504 plan (refer to Chapter 4). Paper administrations are also available for English learners who have been enrolled in school in one of the 50 states of the United States or in the District of Columbia for less than a year (first enrolled within 12 months from the first day of the ACCESS testing window). The decision to administer the ACCESS Paper should be based on an individual consideration of the student’s familiarity with the technology used in the online testing platform. **NEW!** This guidance has been updated to better address student proficiency with technology instead of language proficiency.

Before ordering a paper test for an eligible student who meets this criterion, please consider the following:

- Other than the provisions for the writing test noted above, it is not possible to combine administration modes. Students cannot take some domains on paper and some online.
- Students should be included in the decision-making process before selecting a paper administration.

Note: Some new EL students may be identified as recently arrived English learners (RAELs) for accountability purposes. The RAEL accountability indicator does not affect the determination of which English learners are eligible to use paper test materials for ACCESS. Refer to the *Recently Arrived English Learner (RAEL)* section of Chapter 9 for more information.

Other Considerations

The ACCESS Listening test allows students to pause and replay a listening prompt; however, students should only use this functionality in rare instances (such as a disruption in the room prevented the student from hearing a prompt), **not** as a test-taking strategy. The Listening test must be invalidated if students intentionally pause and replay listening prompts. Students may only listen to the prompt one time per item unless they have the repeat audio accommodation that allows them to repeat the listening prompt.

Test Administration Considerations for MCA

For online testing, test sessions are created and managed in PearsonAccess Next by District and School Assessment Coordinators, or other staff as assigned. The *MCA Online Testing User Guide* is updated annually and posted on the [User Guides](#) page of the PearsonAccess Next website (PearsonAccess Next > Resources & Training > User Guides).

Students using paper test materials write their answers in their paper test book (unless they require the scribe accommodation). Once the student has completed their test, district staff enter the student responses written in the paper test book into TestNav during the testing window in order for the test to be scored and reported.

Note: Only student responses that are entered online are scored. Refer to *Data Entry for MCA and MTAS* later in this chapter for more information.

After Hours Testing

For MCA test security purposes, access to TestNav is limited. Students can only log into their tests between 6 a.m.–5 p.m. on weekdays, and staff can only enter student responses for data entry between 6 a.m.–7 p.m. on weekdays throughout the testing windows. If the district needs to test students or enter data outside of these hours, the DAC must contact mde.testing@state.mn.us at least two business days in advance and provide the rationale for the extended hours, along with the dates and times of the planned test administrations. MDE will review the rationale and determine if an exception is allowed.

Cell Phone and Device Policy

Policy for Students

Students must **not** use or access cell phones, wearable technology, or any other devices at any time during a testing session, including during breaks or when they finish testing for the day. “Wearable” technology is

defined as devices that may be worn on a student’s body that can electronically send, receive, or capture information (for example, smartwatches, fitness trackers, Bluetooth headphones).

District and School Assessment Coordinators must develop and train staff on school-specific cell phone/device policies and procedures. Test Monitors and Test Administrators, in turn, must understand how to implement these policies and procedures prior to test administration. As technology continues to change, districts will need to discuss the types of technology students have and the plans for ensuring students do not access them during testing. **INFO!** MDE does not have a specific list of all prohibited devices. For questions on device or technology usage, contact mde.testing@state.mn.us. Note: Students wearing Bluetooth headphones is a common misadministration. Ensure a process is in place to prevent students from wearing Bluetooth headphones before they start testing, while they are testing, and after they have exited or submitted their test but are still in the testing room.

Students must not use cell phones or devices to access resources for any test or subject. Due to rising plagiarism concerns over the past few years, there is increased concern related to the ACCESS Speaking and Writing tests, as students need to produce their own responses to items. Ensure cell phone and device policies are in place to prevent plagiarism on these tests.

Remember to make sure Test Monitors and Test Administrators know what kinds of wearable technology to look for on testing days.



Wearable technology includes:

- Cell phones
- Audio devices
- Smartwatches
- Fitness trackers
- Other devices that can send/receive information



- If a student has a cell phone or device out at any point while testing, the student’s test has been compromised and needs to be invalidated, even if the student did not use the cell phone or device.
- Students are not allowed to wear or access wearable technology during testing if the device can electronically send, receive, or capture information. If these devices are worn during testing, the student’s test must be invalidated because the student has access to the device, unless the district can definitively determine that the device did not send, receive, and retain any information. Ensure Test Administrators and Test Monitors are aware of the types of wearable technology that students may have.

- As technology continues to change, it may not be readily apparent that something a student is wearing has these capabilities, and Test Administrators and Test Monitors must ensure that they are not worn or accessible during testing. Refer to information at the end of this section for exceptions.
- Even if devices have a “school mode” meant to limit the functionality, this mode may not work the same across all types of technology. If students are wearing a device that is in school mode, the district must investigate to confirm that the device prevents any ability to send, receive, and retain any information or the test must be invalidated. Due to the risk of a security violation and test invalidations, MDE recommends that all wearable technology be collected or removed.
- Districts must implement policies and procedures restricting student access to cell phones and other devices during test administration in order to maintain test security and prevent disruptions for other students. Examples of district procedures include collecting student phones and wearable technology, verifying phones and devices are turned off, or requiring students to store and turn off phones and other devices so they are inaccessible during test administration. It is also recommended that devices be turned off when stored. **INFO!** While districts may allow classroom teachers to determine their own classroom cell phone policies for instruction, no classroom teacher has the authority to allow a student to access a cell phone and/or use it for statewide assessments.
- Districts must determine what action will be taken to minimize disruptions during testing if the district cell phone and device procedure is not followed. For example, if a student receives a notification (such as a ringtone or vibration) on a device kept in a backpack or pocket, the district procedure may be that the student hand it directly to the Test Monitor and/or silence it without looking at it. In these cases, MDE does not require the district to invalidate the test if the student simply hands over the phone or device or silences it without looking at it; however, if there is any doubt whether the student accessed the phone or other device, the test must be invalidated.
- Even if the student has exited or submitted the test, cell phones or other devices may not be used in the testing room. If the student has exited or submitted the test and accesses a cell phone or other prohibited device (including wearable technology), the district will need to take further action to determine if test security or the integrity of other students’ tests were violated. The student’s completed test is not invalidated in this case because the test itself was not affected.

The test code for invalidations due to cell phone or device access is INV-D for MCA/MTAS and INV for the affected domain(s) of ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS. **INFO!** If cell phone or device access occurs on the ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS, all previous domains taken in the same sitting need to be invalidated. The invalidation of a student’s test must be documented on the *Test Administration Report (TAR)*, which is kept on file at the district. The district will need to follow the policies and procedures they have set out for students accessing their devices during testing. This may involve verifying whether or not test security has been violated by checking pictures and messages or determining which applications the student accessed during the test session (the *Prohibited Electronic Devices Investigation Guide* in Appendix B may be used for guidance). If there was a security violation (for example, the student used the cell phone to take a picture of the test) a security violation also needs to be submitted through Assessment Security Records (ASR).

The only exceptions to this policy are the use of supported devices for taking the online test or if the device is used as a medical monitor.

- Personal hearing aids and other amplification systems are allowed. If the device includes Bluetooth capabilities, the Test Monitor must confirm that the audio is only connected to the testing device if testing online. If the amplification can be heard by others, the student must take the assessment in an individual setting.
- If a supported device is used to take the test (for example, to access a word-to-word dual-language online language dictionary or as an approved assistive technology device), it cannot be used for any other purpose during testing sessions, including during test session breaks, and must be turned off or put away after the student has completed testing.
- If a device is used as a medical monitor, this situation must be officially documented by a medical professional such as a licensed school nurse or family doctor, and the documentation must be kept with the TAR. If a student will use a device as a medical monitor, ensure the Test Administrator or Test Monitor is aware that the student must retain the device and understands how the student will need to access it. If testing in a group, the student must notify the Test Administrator or Test Monitor before accessing the device, and the Test Administrator/Test Monitor must ensure the device is not accessed for other purposes.



Ensure staff are aware of these limited exceptions to the cell phone and device policy.

Policy for Test Administrators/Test Monitors and Staff

Districts must determine how Test Administrators and Test Monitors will alert others if issues arise (for example, sick student in the room, technical issues). Communication options could include using a phone, email, text or instant message, or hanging a sign outside the door.

To allow Test Administrators and Test Monitors to continue active monitoring with the least disruption, districts may choose to allow Test Administrators and Test Monitors to use their cell phones, wearable technology, or other electronic devices to alert other staff of issues. At the district’s discretion, wearable technology (for example, smartwatches or fitness trackers) is allowed for Test Administrators and Test Monitors.

Test Administrators and Test Monitors may **only** use these devices to alert others that assistance is needed or to access the *ACCESS Test Administrator’s Scripts* (grades 4–12) or *MCA Testing Directions* electronically. Test content can never be looked at, photographed, or communicated, including when the Test Administrator or Test Monitor needs to alert others about an issue (refer to *Reporting Suspected Item and Translation Errors and Technical Issues* below). Test Administrators and Test Monitors may not check email or work on their devices, and cell phones and wearable technology should be silenced to reduce disruptions. If a district chooses to allow Test Administrators and Test Monitors to use devices for contacting other staff during testing or accessing the applicable directions, the district must place particular emphasis on proper and improper device use when they communicate to staff about district policies and procedures for testing.

Staff who may be going between rooms or helping troubleshoot technical issues, like the DAC or Technology Coordinator, may also use devices to contact the service provider’s help desk; however, they should

step out of the room to make calls, if possible, to minimize disruptions. Note: Students must not be left unsupervised while testing is in progress.

Monitoring Test Administration

A critical component of successful test administration is having Test Administrators and Test Monitors who actively monitor students at all times. “Active monitoring” means carefully observing student behavior throughout testing and ensuring students are working independently and making progress in their tests.

Active monitoring may mean different things depending on the type of testing room and the number of students in the testing session. For example, in a small computer lab or classroom with a small group of students, Test Administrators or Test Monitors may be able to stay in the front of the room and see that all students are working independently and making progress in their tests. However, in a large computer lab or classroom, Test Administrators and Test Monitors will need to circulate around the room to ensure that test security is maintained and students are working independently. Walking around the testing room discourages prohibited behavior and also makes Test Administrators and Test Monitors available to answer allowable questions and respond to unexpected situations.

Depending on the setting, more than one Test Administrator or Test Monitor may be needed to ensure that students are working independently and not accessing unallowable materials. As noted in Chapter 7, all efforts should be made to have at least one Test Administrator/Test Monitor for every 30 students for most assessments; refer to Chapter 7 for updated information on smaller group sizes for ACCESS Speaking and Writing. Additional Test Administrators or Test Monitors or other precautions should be considered if more students than the typical classroom size are being tested and/or the testing room is not a conducive setting for active monitoring by a single staff member.

Test Administrators and Test Monitors must actively monitor students throughout the entire test administration, even after students have been testing for a period of time and do not have any questions. Examples of prohibited Test Administrator or Test Monitor activities include planning lessons, grading papers, working online, or talking casually with other staff.

While the Test Administrator or Test Monitor may need to check online test status on the computer, or stop to answer a student question, the primary focus must remain on actively monitoring students who are testing, even when test administration or technical issues arise. Students must be monitored by a trained staff at all times and cannot be left unsupervised during test administration. Untrained staff are not allowed to monitor test sessions. Districts must have a plan for providing assistance to Test Administrators and Test Monitors when needed (such as additional trained Test Administrators/Test Monitors, technology staff) so active test monitoring can continue.

What Help Can Test Administrators and Test Monitors Give to Students

Table 34 reflects policies for grades 1–12 ACCESS and MCA administrations. Different types of supports may be allowed for Kindergarten ACCESS, WIDA Alternate ACCESS, and MTAS; refer to resources specific to each test for detailed guidance.

Using the guidance from the applicable *Test Administrator’s Script* (ACCESS) or *Testing Directions* (MCA), including providing scripted instructions, is required to ensure the standardization of statewide test administrations. Test Administrators and Test Monitors must use and refer to these directions before students start the test and as students start testing to address student questions that arise during testing and to provide reminders to students near the end of the testing session.

Table 34. What Help Test Administrators and Test Monitors Can Give

| Type of Assistance | Administration Guidelines |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Providing written information</p> | <p>Test Administrators and Test Monitors may write information specific to test administration on the board or in the room. Examples of allowable information include information about scheduling (such as “We will stop after answering 25 questions,” “We will stop testing at the end of the class period”) and what students may do when they are done with testing (such as “Read a book when you are done testing”).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For ACCESS, these guidelines about providing written information are specific to Minnesota. • For MCA only, Test Monitors may also write out any scripted information from the <i>Script to Read to Students</i> and the <i>Answering Questions and Providing Assistance</i> sections, as well as the transcript of student directions (for online) sections. Information in these sections that is not scripted (such as general encouragement) may not be written. However, Test Monitors should consider what is needed by students; providing too much written information (which may also be repeated verbally, as needed) may be distracting or overwhelming for students. |

| Type of Assistance | Administration Guidelines |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Repeating directions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For ACCESS, Test Administrators may rephrase, explain in English, or translate the directions into the student’s native language to help students understand what to do. Test items, practice items embedded in the test, and test content cannot be rephrased, explained, or translated. • For MCA, Test Monitors may repeat—but not paraphrase—the scripted instructions in the <i>Testing Directions</i>. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For online administrations, if students need any of the student directions that appear in the beginning of their online tests repeated, Test Monitors must use the transcript included in the <i>Testing Directions: Online</i>; Test Monitors must not read them from the student’s screen. ○ For paper administrations, Test Monitors may repeat any student directions included in the <i>Testing Directions: Paper</i>, but must not read directions from the student’s test book. • For MCA paper administrations, if the Test Monitor believes a student missed any item(s), they may use only the scripted instructions from the <i>Testing Directions</i> to remind the student to make sure they have answered all items. They must not point out specific items or provide any other instructions that may lead the student to change or reconsider their answers. |

| Type of Assistance | Administration Guidelines |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Assistance with the test | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students must be familiar with how to answer different types of items for the test they are taking, how to use the online tools and accessibility features, and how to navigate through the online test. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For ACCESS, Test Administrators may provide students assistance with equipment for testing (such as audio volume, headset) if needed, but must ensure other students are not disrupted. They may also remind students how to navigate to the next item. ○ For MCA, the only exceptions where Test Monitors may provide additional guidance are included in the <i>Testing Directions</i>. The <i>Answering Questions and Providing Assistance</i> section outlines what help may be given during testing. For example, Test Monitors may verbally describe the functionality of an item type if a student cannot move forward, but they must not demonstrate it or show how to answer the specific test item. • Test Administrators and Test Monitors must not define or pronounce a word within a test item, discuss a test item, or give an opinion on a test item. • To ensure that all students receive a score that accurately reflects what they know, Test Administrators and Test Monitors must not give any indication that there may be a different approach or answer, or help students with answers to items in any way. • During testing, Test Administrators and Test Monitors must not remind students of any test-taking or academic strategies (such as using scratch paper or a certain online tool). Help of this sort should be provided prior to testing, such as when the applicable student resources are used to prepare students for testing. • During testing, Test Administrators and Test Monitors may provide redirection or encouragement to students to keep them on task, but they must not assist the student with the test content in any way. Guidance related to student and classroom management scenarios are provided in the applicable <i>Test Administrator’s Script</i> or <i>Testing Directions</i> to help Test Administrators and Test Monitors evaluate what is appropriate to say and do for situations not directly related to test content. |

Type of Assistance

Administration Guidelines

Pacing and monitoring student progress

In terms of pacing and monitoring student progress during testing, the guidance varies by test.

- For ACCESS, there may be times when a student is making slow or no progress in a domain. It is important that Test Administrators use appropriate prompts or encouragement in these situations so the student can progress through the domain as intended. The *Test Administrator Manual* provides some guidance, including the following:
 - The Test Administrator should monitor student progress and be proactive in assisting students if they are having difficulty progressing.
 - If a student pauses for a long time (one or two minutes) during the test, and it is clear that the student is not just listening to the test audio, the Test Administrator should prompt the student to provide a response and move on.
 - Remind Test Administrators that ACCESS is a language proficiency test rather than an academic content test, and that spending more than WIDA’s estimated test administration time on a domain will generally not increase a student’s score.
- For MCA, Test Monitors may not control the pace at which students test, as the tests are not timed and students should be allowed to continue as long as they are making progress.
 - For example, if a Test Monitor notices that a student is moving quickly through their test, they may repeat any scripted instructions from the *Testing Directions*, but it is not permissible to say “Slow down” or “Take your time.” Help of this kind is a short step from saying something that guides the student to changing test item answers.
 - If a student has gone beyond the number of items or science section planned for that day’s testing, the Test Monitor may use scripted instructions to remind students where to stop.
 - Similarly, if a student is not able to complete the number of items or science section planned for the testing session or is not progressing through the test, the Test Monitor may use scripted instructions to direct the student to stop testing.
 - Test Monitors must follow the district policies and procedures regarding what to do when students finish early or need extra time.

While Test Administrators and Test Monitors may observe student tests to verify where students are at in terms of how testing is scheduled (such as verifying how many items students have completed, verifying which section they are in for science), they must ensure they are not viewing secure test content. Unauthorized viewing of secure test content is when someone views the content long enough to determine the essence of it.

| Type of Assistance | Administration Guidelines |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| After testing | <p>Following testing, Test Administrators, Test Monitors, or other staff must not ask students about specific test items. If students ask about a specific item following testing, Test Administrators and Test Monitors should remind students that items are secure and cannot be discussed.</p> <p>For MCA, if all testing is completed for the grade and subject in the school, the Test Monitor or other staff may provide instruction on the general concept. However, targeted instruction as a result of student questions on the general concept is not allowed if any students still need to complete testing. In any case, a Test Monitor or other staff must not address or solve the specific test item.</p> |

Reporting Suspected Item and Translation Errors and Technical Issues

INFO! All items on statewide assessments go through numerous educator reviews, as well as reviews at MDE and at the service providers, before being placed on a test. However, there may be times when a student feels that there is no correct answer or has a technology issue with an item. In order to maintain test security, MDE requires that a specific process be followed to report this to MDE.

If a student points out a test item that appears to have an error for any statewide assessment, the Test Administrator or Test Monitor should note the grade, subject/domain, item number, section number (Science MCA only), student MARSS/SSID number, and if an online test, information on how the online test was accessed (such as device and/or operating system) and instruct the student to continue the test. This same process is used for Mathematics and Science MCAs if a student points out a translation that appears to be incorrect in translated word lists or the pop-up translations. Following the test session, the Test Administrator or Test Monitor should notify the District or School Assessment Coordinator about any test items or translations that appear to have an error.

If a technical issue occurs and a student receives an error message in an online test, the Test Administrator or Test Monitor should write down the error message and number along with the student and test information specified above. If the technical issue prevents the student from responding to the item, the student should exit the test. For technical issues, the Test Administrator or Test Monitor should contact district technology staff following the district’s procedure, as needed, and provide information to the District or School Assessment Coordinator following the test session.



When reporting potential issues, include **only** the student’s MARSS/SSID number. Do not include any content of the item, including images or descriptions.

For all suspected item/translation errors or technical issues, the DAC contacts MDE at mde.testing@state.mn.us or the service provider help desk and gives the information collected by the Test Administrator or Test Monitor. Note: When reporting potential issues via email, include only the student’s MARSS/SSID number and no other

student information. In addition, the content of the item itself should never be referenced, captured as an image, emailed within the school or district, or sent in a communication with MDE or the service provider because doing so is a security violation.

INFO! If an issue with test content is reported for standards-based accountability assessments (MCA or MTAS), MDE will verify that the item contains a correct answer and is functioning as expected. Historically, items have been found to have a single correct answer, with functionality performing as expected. In the rare circumstance that an issue is discovered, MDE has processes in place to update student scores and notify districts. For English language proficiency accountability assessments (ACCESS or WIDA Alternate ACCESS), WIDA and DRC follow their processes for any reports. However, while these reports are important to provide to MDE, districts should feel confident that the rigorous processes used to develop statewide assessments result in high-quality test content.

Misadministrations Occurring During Test Administration

If a Test Administrator or Test Monitor creates a non-standard situation during test administration, the student's test may still be scored if it measures what is being assessed. However, if the misadministration compromises the validity of the test results, the test must be invalidated. Similarly, security violations will result in the invalidation of a test if the integrity of any student's test is compromised or a student was not allowed an opportunity to independently demonstrate their knowledge. Misadministrations, and invalidations if applicable, must be documented on the TAR; security violations must be submitted through the ASR. Contact mde.testing@state.mn.us for guidance on which form to use to document a misadministration. Note: When contacting MDE, include only the student's MARSS/SSID number and no other identifiable information.

MDE provides two documents outlining some situations or misadministrations that may occur during test administration and require action by the district, MDE, or the applicable service provider. While not exhaustive lists, these documents provide examples of possible test administration situations or misadministrations and the likely outcomes.

- The *MCA/MTAS Irregularities* is updated annually before test administration and posted on the [Policies and Procedures](#) page of the PearsonAccess Next website (PearsonAccess Next > Resources & Training > Policies and Procedures). In many cases, the DAC will contact the Pearson help desk and provide detailed information about the issue that occurred and the affected student(s).
- The *ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS Irregularities* is updated annually before test administration and posted on the [Minnesota](#) page of the WIDA website, under Manuals, Guides and Test Materials (WIDA > Minnesota [under Member/State Pages dropdown at the top of the page]).

Breaks and Leaving During Testing

- Breaks:
 - For Kindergarten ACCESS, the breaks are scripted into the *Test Administrator's Script*. For grades 1–12 ACCESS, breaks are only allowed between domains, unless a student has an IEP or 504 plan that documents the need for breaks.
 - For WIDA Alternate ACCESS, allow students to take brief breaks as needed.

- After approximately every 30 minutes of MCA testing (or on a schedule determined by the district), students may be allowed a short break.
- For MTAS, breaks during testing may be provided as needed. However, a task for which a student has already supplied a response cannot be re-administered, so a task should be finished before taking a break or ending a session.
- Test Administrators and Test Monitors must continue to actively monitor students during a break to ensure students do not discuss the test.
- Whenever students leave the testing room during online testing (such as for a bathroom break), they should exit the test, cover the test content in some way (for example, close the laptop, turn off the monitor, turn over the device), or pause the test (ACCESS Online only) unless an emergency prevents them from doing so. For paper test materials, students should close their test books.
- Ideally, only one student should be allowed to leave the room at a time. If more than one student leaves the room, there must be a plan in place for additional staff to monitor students both inside and outside the room. If multiple testing rooms are being used, there must be a procedure to coordinate and/or supervise students on break from different rooms. Test security must be maintained, and any prolonged absences or repeated requests for breaks must be investigated for a potential security violation.
- If the entire group must leave because of an emergency (such as a fire alarm or a school safety issue), it is important to follow all safety procedures and exit as quickly as possible. The Test Administrator or Test Monitor should close and lock the door when leaving, if possible, to maintain test security.
- **INFO!** All secure materials should be left in the testing room, including student testing tickets and scratch paper. Test Administrators and Test Monitors must continue to monitor students to ensure they do not discuss the test during their time away from the testing room.
- If students leave a test session and are unable to return:
 - For grades 1–12 ACCESS, since students are to finish the domain within a sitting, districts must have a plan in place for the student to finish the domain later that day.
 - In cases of illness or emergency, students may complete the started domain in a makeup session on another day; when resuming, students cannot return to any previously completed items.
 - For the rare case when an individual student is not able to complete the domain in the same day for any other reason, the student may still finish on another day. However, Test Administrators must contact the District or School Assessment Coordinator so that it can be documented on the *Test Administration Report* (TAR); this allows District and School Assessment Coordinators to better track how often the situation arises so guidance around scheduling and monitoring student progress can be provided as needed within the district.
 - For online MCA, students will resume testing during a makeup session. Students cannot review previously completed items if more than 20 minutes have elapsed.
 - For paper test materials for MCA, students will resume testing during a makeup session. Students may complete a started segment but Test Monitors should remind students that they cannot go back to previously completed items. Note: For reading and science, students may need to go back to access the passage or scene but they cannot change answers to previously completed items.

- If technical issues lead to a break in a testing session:
 - For ACCESS Online grades 1–12, students should resume testing the domain within the same day if the issues are resolved. If the issues cannot be resolved by the service provider within the same day, the students may resume the domain during a makeup session, but the students cannot return to previously completed items.
 - For online MCA, if the issue is resolved and the students are able to continue testing within 20 minutes, the students can review any previously completed items in the group or section. However, if issues are not resolved within 20 minutes, students cannot review previously completed items but can complete the remainder of the test.
- If a student does not return for the remainder of the test window:
 - For Kindergarten and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, the items the student completed in the test booklet will be scored when the test booklet is returned to DRC.
 - For ACCESS Online grades 1–12, all complete and incomplete domains will be scored.
 - For online MCA, the items the student has completed will be scored.
 - For paper test materials for MCA and MTAS, the responses to the items the student completed must be entered online by district staff during the testing window for scoring.

Defective or Damaged Test Materials

If a paper test booklet/book is defective, obtain another one (ensuring it does not also contain the defect) and give the new test booklet/book to the student. Defective, torn, and damaged secure test booklets/books must be returned to the service provider following their instructions. If the security number is illegible or the secure test material has been destroyed, use the security checklist to identify the material and report the security number of the affected material to the service provider.

If a paper test booklet/book is damaged by bodily fluids (such as vomit, blood), the student’s responses must be transferred to a new test booklet (ACCESS) or entered online (MCA/MTAS) if possible. If the answers cannot be entered or transferred, the student may retake part or all of the assessment in a new test booklet/book. The damaged test materials must be disposed of securely (for example, shredded or incinerated), and the security number of the destroyed test materials reported to the service provider. The incident, including the name of the staff person transcribing the responses, must be included on a TAR.

What Students May Do After They Complete a Test

After exiting/submitting (online) or stopping/finishing (paper) an ACCESS or MCA test, students may either stay in the testing room until the test session is over, or they may leave if permitted by the district. It is the DAC’s responsibility to make sure the district has established an after-testing procedure before testing begins.

If students stay in the testing room after they exit or submit their test, disruptions for other students must be kept to a minimum. Students who have exited their tests may read a paper book, work on activities on paper that are not related to the domain or subject(s) being tested (such as word searches, drawings, or coloring sheets), or sit quietly.

- Note that students may read a paper book, even if reading is being tested, but textbooks for any subject(s) being tested are not allowed.
- Student test materials (such as scratch paper and testing tickets) must be collected before students work on other activities. The district determines if other paper activities completed by students after they were done testing need to be collected as well.
- If multiple subjects are being tested (which may happen during a makeup session), the materials students can use must be taken into consideration.
- Cell phones or other devices (including wearable technology) cannot be used at any time, even if the student has completed testing or is working on something unrelated.

Students who have finished testing in a previous test session are not allowed to be in the testing room on subsequent days of testing.

- Students who are not testing may cause a distraction for students who are still testing. As the number of students who have completed testing increases, students who are still testing may feel pressure to rush or finish their test, which is not conducive for a positive testing experience. In addition, it may be difficult for students who have finished testing previously to remain quiet throughout subsequent test sessions.
- Students who are in the testing room but not actively testing have additional access to test content that they would not have if they were no longer in the testing room. This increases the risk for test security violations and invalidations due to cheating (for example, a student who is not testing sees test content and provides an answer to a student who is still testing) or device usage (for example, a student who is no longer testing may be more likely to access a prohibited device).

MDE understands that these policies can lead to some scheduling and logistics challenges for districts, but these test security policies are consistent with those in states across the nation and come directly from recommendations by nationally recognized test security experts.



Make a plan for students who have finished testing in previous test sessions since they are not allowed to be in the room on future testing days.

Data Entry for MCA and MTAS

MCA Data Entry

Pearson does not score paper test materials. Therefore, in order for those tests to be scored, district staff must enter student responses from paper test materials for the Reading, Mathematics, and Science MCAs. This response entry is done in a Data Entry test in Pearson’s TestNav system during the testing window. Data entry must be completed during the testing window. Ensure enough time is planned to complete data entry.

For test security purposes, TestNav can only be accessed for entry of student responses during the hours of 6 a.m.–7 p.m. on weekdays throughout the testing window. The *MCA Data Entry User Guide* is updated annually

and posted to the [User Guides](#) page of the PearsonAccess Next website (PearsonAccess Next > Resources & Training > User Guides).

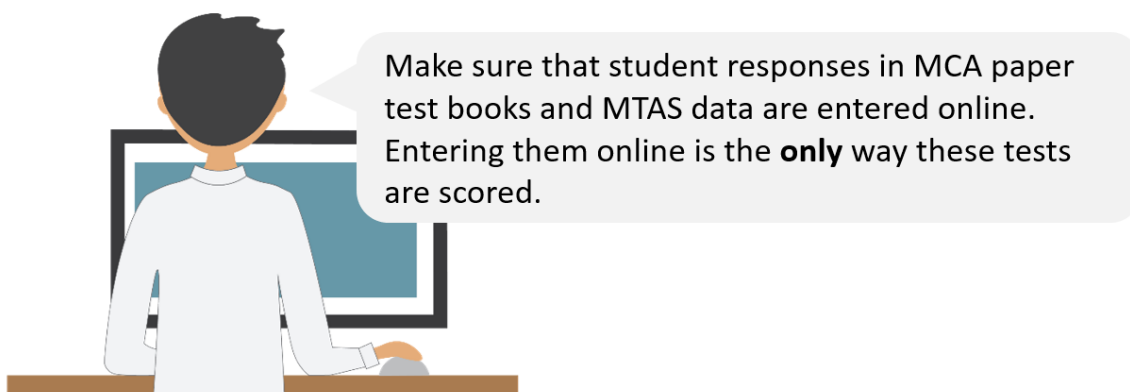
MTAS LCI and Score Entry

Learner Characteristics Inventory (LCI) data must be entered in PearsonAccess Next before any MTAS data can be entered. While LCI data entry opens one week prior to the start of the MTAS testing window, MTAS tasks cannot be administered and MTAS data cannot be entered until the MTAS testing window opens. **INFO!** The Learner Characteristics Inventory (LCI) and MTAS Data Collection Form are available as perforated sheets within the Task Administration Manual provided to districts (to allow for easy removal and storage) and posted annually to the [User Guides](#) page of the PearsonAccess Next website (PearsonAccess Next > Resources & Training > User Guides).

Once LCI information is submitted, data from MTAS administrations must be entered online in PearsonAccess Next during the testing window in order to be scored for reporting. Ensure enough time is planned to complete data entry before the end of the testing windows. The *MTAS Data Entry User Guide* is updated annually and posted to the [User Guides](#) page of the PearsonAccess Next website (PearsonAccess Next > Resources & Training > User Guides).

Note that the Science MTAS window ends with the Reading and Mathematics MTAS testing window (not with Science MCA). All Science MTAS tasks must be administered and data entered by the close of the MTAS testing window.

LCI and MTAS Data Collection Forms are not returned to the service provider. Instead, keep all LCI and MTAS Data Collection Forms on file at the school or district for one year after entering scores online in case there are any questions about data entered. These forms contain private student data, and must therefore be kept in a secure location. If the Data Collection Form within the Task Administration Manual is used to document student scores, remove the form or make a copy of it before returning the Task Administration Manual with other secure materials.



Make sure that student responses in MCA paper test books and MTAS data are entered online. Entering them online is the **only** way these tests are scored.

Chapter 9 — Student Participation and Students in Special Circumstances and Situations

Overview

This chapter provides definitions and clarifications for the wide variety of circumstances that can affect student participation in the English language proficiency and standards-based accountability assessments.

- Questions on some of the information referenced in this chapter (for example, enrollment data or accountability calculations) may need to be addressed by other divisions at MDE; refer to the *MDE Contacts* at the beginning of this manual for contact information.
- Some of these circumstances may require a test code to be indicated; this information is provided at the end of this chapter.

The information provided in this chapter is meant to provide transparency and guidance for student participation requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA); however, districts should always make decisions based on what is right for each individual student. The policies and procedures outlined here should not be used to justify acting against a student’s best interest.

Use this chapter as guidance to answer your **“I have a student who...”** questions.



Districts must have a process in place for communicating information to applicable school staff about students who will not be participating in testing due to any of the circumstances or situations outlined in this chapter.

Finally, another important consideration related to the information in this chapter is collaboration and communication with the MARSS coordinator about students in specific situations, as enrollment start and end dates, English learner and Special Education indicators, and/or State Aid Categories all may affect a student’s participation.

Student Participation

ESSA and Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.30 require that students be assessed annually in reading, mathematics, and science. Similarly, ESSA and Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.59 require that all English learners be assessed annually in English language proficiency. Districts must attempt to test all students who are enrolled at any time during the applicable testing window.

Specific enrollment criteria are used to determine if and how students are included for accountability indicators and assessment participation:

- Accountability indicators: Students must meet specific accountability enrollment requirements for inclusion in accountability indicator calculations, including being enrolled on the first day of the testing window. Other enrollment requirements include being enrolled half an academic year and being enrolled on Dec. 15. Refer to *North Star Business Rules–Support* posted on the [Accountability Indicators](#) page of the MDE website for more information and detailed specifications for each indicator (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > School Achievement > School and District Accountability > Accountability Indicators).
- Assessment participation: **INFO!** The state is expected to test 95 percent of all students with federally-approved statewide reading, mathematics, and science assessments. In addition, ESSA mandates that all English learners participate in English language proficiency assessments. This information is required to be reported annually to the U.S. Department of Education and is part of the Minnesota Report Card. Assessment participation is not included as part of North Star Accountability calculations. While there are no specific requirements for districts and schools, the overall state participation rate is a requirement of federal waivers (such as alternate assessment cap waivers), which may affect districts. Assessment participation is reported on the [Minnesota Report Card](#) (Minnesota Report Card > under “How Well are Students Doing?” > “Are students mastering standards?” > Test Achievement Levels, Test Results and Participation). **NEW!** The [Participation Calculations for Statewide Assessments](#) document provides detailed information on assessment participation calculations (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > District Resources (Test Score Interpretation Resources expandable heading)).

Regardless of how participation is determined, students are expected to participate in statewide assessments in order to provide data that can be used to evaluate student learning of the applicable standards. Testing can occur throughout the testing window, as scheduled by the district. Districts must account for any students enrolled on the first day of the testing window who did not test by indicating the applicable test code. The remainder of this chapter provides guidance for several situations and specific circumstances related to how students participate, along with the applicable test codes required for documentation.

504 Plans

Students with a 504 plan must take the applicable English language proficiency and standards-based accountability assessments. Refer to Chapter 4 and the [Section 504](#) page of the MDE website for information on accommodations (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Section 504).

Alternative Learning Centers (ALCs), Alternative Learning Programs (ALPs), and Contract Alternative Program (Private)

School Classifications 41, 42, and 43 provide educational alternatives for certain students. All students at these sites must take the applicable English language proficiency and standards-based accountability assessments. If

students enrolled at these sites are dual-enrolled at another site, refer also to *Dual-Enrolled Students or Concurrent-Enrolled Students* below.

Care and Treatment and Private Facilities

School Classifications 70, 71, 72, 74, 76, 77, 78, and 79 are care and treatment programs that provide a range of medical and mental health services to students. These students must take the applicable English language proficiency and standards-based accountability assessments unless they have been medically excused. Refer to the *Medical Excuse* section of this chapter for detailed information, including the list of criteria that must be met.

Determining a Student's Grade Level

There may be situations in which the student's grade sent in the precode file is incorrect due to inaccurate enrollment data submitted to MDE.

- For ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, grade changes are made in the WIDA Assessment Management System (WIDA AMS). For Kindergarten ACCESS, grades 1–5 ACCESS Online Writing test booklets, WIDA Alternate ACCESS, and ACCESS Paper, change the grade in WIDA AMS and use the student's preprinted label (even though it specifies the incorrect grade) on the appropriate grade-level test booklet. If a student's test booklet needs to be hand-bubbled, ensure the correct grade is indicated so that the test is scored correctly. Do not use hand-bubbling to indicate changes on a test booklet with a preprinted label. Only changes made in WIDA AMS will override information from the preprinted label. Grade changes must also be corrected in student enrollment data.
- For MCA and MTAS, grade changes must be submitted in student enrollment data at least two business days prior to testing or data entry. Grade changes cannot be made in PearsonAccess Next. The grade must be correct in PearsonAccess Next before the student starts testing or data entry begins. Note: The grade can also be changed in Precode Student Eligibility in Test WES one business day prior to testing. If changing grades in Test WES, ensure the grade change is also submitted in student enrollment data.

The grade indicated in student enrollment data on the first day of the testing window determines what assessment a student must take. If the student changes grades after the first day of the testing window, only the assessments for the initial grade are required. For example, if a student is in grade 10 at the beginning of the testing window, the student must take the grade 10 Reading MCA. If the student earns enough credits to be promoted to grade 11 at a later point in the testing window, they are not required to take the grade 11 Mathematics MCA. As long as there is an assessment record that matches the enrolled grade on the first day of the testing window, no other assessments are required.

In the unusual circumstance when a student is enrolled in one grade in a high school and in another grade in an ALC (or dual-enrolled in different grades across districts) for MCA and MTAS, the student will only be sent in precode for the school that has the student indicated in the lower grade; however, the student will need to test for both grades (refer to *Dual-Enrolled Students or Concurrent-Enrolled Students* below for more detailed information). For ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, however, a record for each grade is sent in precode (whether within the same district or across districts).

Dual-Enrolled Students or Concurrent-Enrolled Students

The term dual-enrolled indicates that a student is taking classes in two sites and at least one of them is an ALC or ALP. A concurrent-enrolled student attends two sites part-time. The typical dual-enrolled student is enrolled in a traditional middle or high school full-time and an ALC or ALP for additional courses. For concurrent enrolled, the concurrent sites may be a traditional middle or high school and an ALC or ALP, two traditional schools, or an ALC and an ALP. It is important for both sites where a student is enrolled to collaborate to make sure that dual-enrolled and concurrent enrolled students are tested.

- **INFO!** For ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, dual-enrolled students are sent in precode for each school and, if applicable, each district. The schools and/or districts will need to collaborate to ensure the student is only tested once.
- For MCA and MTAS, a dual-enrolled student's information will be sent for precode for only one of the schools, which means that only one school and/or district will have the student's information sent for online testing or data entry. Precode Student Eligibility in Test WES can be used to change the school sent in precode. Refer to the *Test WES Precode User Guide* posted on the [Test WES](#) page of the MDE website for more information (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Business and Finance > Data Submissions > Test WES).

The student's test results, including results in service provider systems and the Individual Student Report (ISR), are provided only to the school where the student completed the test.

The bullets below provide additional information about testing dual-enrolled students.

- **For dual-enrolled students who are in the same grade at both schools:** For MCA/MTAS, student information is sent for precode for only one school, and only one school will test the student. The school can be changed using Precode Student Eligibility in Test WES if needed.
- **For dual-enrolled students who are in different grades at each school:** For ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, the student will be sent in precode for both schools. For MCA/MTAS, the school that has the student indicated at the lowest grade will have the student's information sent for testing. If the schools come to agreement on the student's grade, the grade must be changed in enrollment data so they match (review the previous bullet and *Determining a Student's Grade Level* above for additional information). However, if the grade remains different between the schools, both schools must test the student in the grade in which the student is enrolled in enrollment data.
 - For ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, if the two grades are within the same grade-level cluster, the student only tests once. If the two grades are in separate grade-level clusters (for example, grade 8 and grade 9), the student completes both assessments.
 - For online MCA, one school will test the student in the grade indicated in enrollment data. Once testing is completed, the second school will change the student's grade and school in Precode Student Eligibility. Once the updated student information appears in PearsonAccess Next, the second school will test the student in the grade it has indicated in enrollment data.
 - For data entry of MCA student responses from paper test materials and MTAS, both schools can test the student using the test materials for the appropriate grade. One school will enter the

responses/scores online for the grade indicated in enrollment data. Once data entry is complete, the second school will change the student's grade and school in Precode Student Eligibility. When the updated student information appears in PearsonAccess Next, the second school can enter the responses/scores online for the grade it has indicated in enrollment data.

In the case where students participate in the MTAS or ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS, the district that administers the assessment must also report the student as special education and/or EL in enrollment data in order for the test to be valid.

English Learners

For testing purposes, English learners are students who are designated as EL in student enrollment data submitted to MDE. They are required to take the applicable English language proficiency and standards-based accountability assessments.

- When EL services are provided, the MARSS Coordinator enters a valid EL Start Date. If a student is identified as an English learner but services are refused by the parents/guardians, no EL Start Date is entered in enrollment data. However, because the student is designated as EL in enrollment data, an ACCESS or WIDA Alternate ACCESS record is still expected. If the parents/guardians also refuse testing, the DEC (declined) test code is indicated in WIDA AMS during the testing window. Refer to *Test Codes* at the end of this chapter for more information on indicating the DEC code.
- If a student is identified as EL at any time during the school year, the student should take the ACCESS or WIDA Alternate ACCESS. This includes any students who are newly identified as EL during the ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS testing window. **INFO!** Note: Minnesota Standardized English Learner Procedures require a district to complete the identification process within two weeks for students who enroll after the beginning of the school year.
- If an English learner from another Minnesota district moves into the new district during the ACCESS or WIDA Alternate ACCESS testing window, check if the student has taken the assessment in the other district. If not, the student should participate in ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS if possible (refer to *Moving Into or Out of the District During Testing* later in this chapter for additional information).
- If an English learner moves from another state and was administered the ACCESS or WIDA Alternate ACCESS in that state, the student must take the assessment again in Minnesota if they are enrolled on the first day of the ACCESS or WIDA Alternate ACCESS testing window. If they move in after the first day of the testing window but before the testing window closes, the district may still want to consider administering the ACCESS or WIDA Alternate ACCESS again since these scores inform the amount and scope of service provided to a student in an English language development program as well as exiting decisions.
- If a student is incorrectly identified as an English learner (for example, exited in the previous school year but enrollment data was not updated by the beginning of the current school year), then updated enrollment information must be submitted to indicate that the student is no longer an English learner. In these cases only, the student is not required to take the ACCESS or WIDA Alternate ACCESS. Contact marss@state.mn.us for information on updating the student's information.

Contact mde.el@state.mn.us or refer to the [English Learner Education](#) page of the MDE website for questions about identification or reclassification of English learners (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > English Learner Education).

Enrolled in Another State (MARSS State Aid Category = 14 or 52)

Students who reside in Minnesota but are enrolled in a district in another state, usually in a neighboring state, are indicated in enrollment data using the State Aid Category of 14 or 52. These students are not expected to participate in the English language proficiency and standards-based accountability assessments; presumably the state where they are enrolled will include the students in its assessment system.

Expelled Students

Expelled students who are still enrolled in the district are required to take the applicable English language proficiency and standards-based accountability assessments. If the expelled student is unable to participate, districts will indicate the ABS (Absent) test code in Test WES during Posttest Editing. Refer to *Test Codes* at the end of this chapter for more information on indicating the ABS code.

Foreign Exchange Students (MARSS State Aid Category = 2)

Although foreign exchange students are enrolled full-time in a public school, their participation in the standards-based accountability assessments (MCA or MTAS) is generally optional (see below for exceptions). If a foreign exchange student will not participate in MCA or MTAS, no action is needed. The student's record will appear in PearsonAccess Next but no test record will be expected if the State Aid Category is indicated correctly in enrollment data. If a foreign exchange student does test, the student's test will not be included in test results summary information.

If a foreign exchange student lacks the necessary English skills to fully participate in classes in English, they may be identified as EL in enrollment data and served in the district's EL program. Foreign exchange students who are designated as EL in enrollment data and are served in an EL program must participate in the English language proficiency accountability assessments (ACCESS or WIDA Alternate ACCESS).

Note: Optional participation only applies to foreign exchange students categorized in enrollment data as State Aid Category 2. If a district indicates any other State Aid Category for a foreign exchange student, they are required to participate in applicable assessments. For questions on how to report foreign exchange students in enrollment data, contact marss@state.mn.us.

GED Students

GED students are not expected to participate in English language proficiency and standards-based accountability assessments because they are not considered public school students.

Homebound/Non-Attendance Students

These students are enrolled in a district even though they may not attend school in-person. Educational services are provided as appropriate, given the circumstances of the student, and they must take the applicable English language proficiency and standards-based accountability assessments.

Homebound students are expected to test online, with a district staff member physically present, unless the student has an IEP or 504 plan that requires paper test materials or the student is administered an alternate assessment. District-owned devices must be used, the Test Administrator or Test Monitor must have completed all required trainings, and the student should test where the educational services are provided. All security and test administration procedures must be followed even when administering tests in settings outside of the school (for example, in the student's home or a public library), and applicable testing windows must be followed.

Homeless Shelters

School Classification 73 defines shelters as temporary housing for students in crisis. Educational services are provided as appropriate, given the circumstances of the student. Students must take the applicable English language proficiency and standards-based accountability assessments.

Home-Schooled Students

Home-schooled students are not public school students. Therefore, they are not required to participate in the standards-based accountability assessments, no matter which courses or classes they are taking in a public school. However, if the student has an enrollment record and is not designated as a shared-time student (MARSS State Aid Category = 16, 17, or 18), then the student cannot be considered home-schooled and must participate; refer to *Shared-Time Students* later in this chapter for additional information.

Home-schooled students who wish to participate in the standards-based accountability assessments are charged a fee (refer to *Cost of Tests for Nonpublic and Home-Schooled Students* at the end of this chapter for additional information) and must have the test administered by public school staff. Home-schooled students must be manually added to precode files using Precode Student Eligibility in Test WES with the Home-Schooled Student enrollment code. If a home-school student does test, the student's test will not be included in test results summary information.

Note: Home-schooled students are not allowed to participate in ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS. If these students are indicated as English learners and receiving English learner instruction in a public school district, they must be indicated as shared-time students and English learners in enrollment data. Refer to *Shared-Time Students* in this chapter for additional information.

Incarcerated Students at Correctional Facilities

School Classification 70 includes students placed in a correctional program but still enrolled in a public school district; these students are required to participate in the applicable English language proficiency and standards-based accountability assessments. For online testing, correctional facilities need to provide the necessary and appropriate resources for students to test. If the student is unable to test, indicate the ABS (Absent) test code

during Posttest Editing. Refer to *Test Codes* at the end of this chapter for more information on indicating the ABS code.

Independent Study Students

Students participating in independent study programs are required to participate in the applicable English language proficiency and standards-based accountability assessments for the grade indicated in enrollment data during the testing window.

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Students with an IEP must take the applicable English language proficiency and standards-based accountability assessments. Refer to Chapter 4 and the [Statewide Assessment for Students with Disabilities](#) page for information on supports and accommodations and participation (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Special Education > Statewide Assessment for Students with Disabilities).

If a student is identified in enrollment data as receiving special education services, but services are terminated at some point later in the school year, the student will continue to be indicated as receiving services (SPED = Y) in Test WES and for final reporting, even if the status is updated in enrollment data. Once a student is identified as SPED in enrollment data, the SPED identification remains for the entire school year.

Intermediate Districts

Students enrolled in intermediate districts are required to participate in the applicable English language proficiency and standards-based accountability assessments. It is important for regular school districts to work with intermediate districts to make sure that dual-enrolled students are tested (refer to *Dual-Enrolled Students or Concurrent-Enrolled Students* earlier in this chapter for additional information).

Medical Excuse

There may be circumstances when a student cannot be assessed due to a significant medical emergency. A medical emergency is defined as a debilitating onset of a severe or life-threatening physical or mental illness, infection, injury, disease, and/or emotional trauma that meets **all** of the criteria listed below. If a student is unable to take the test because of a medical emergency, the district indicates the ME (Medical Excuse) test code for the student.

A medical emergency is different from a medical condition. A medical emergency is a short-term circumstance that directly interferes with a student's ability to participate in testing where no alternate arrangements can be made, or appropriate supports cannot be provided to assess the student. Unlike a *medical emergency*, an ongoing *medical condition* is a situation in which a school and/or district is providing instruction, and the student should be tested with any supports or accommodations for which the student may be eligible. A student who has an IEP or 504 plan due to a medical condition is still expected to participate in the applicable English language proficiency and standards-based accountability assessments, unless the criteria for medical excuse apply.

Criteria for Medical Excuse

In order to use the ME test code, all of the following criteria must be met, verified, and documented:

- The medical emergency arises from an accident, disaster, crisis, or other circumstance that was not foreseeable and is beyond the control of the student, the parent/guardian of the student, and the student’s school or district.
- The medical emergency affects the student so severely as to incapacitate the student from participation in the assessment for the duration of the testing window.
- The student’s medical emergency and incapacity cannot be remedied with appropriate supports or accommodations provided to the student by the district.
- The school or district has been provided with written documentation by a licensed medical professional, operating under the scope of their license, stating the underlying medical emergency exists.

Districts do not need to request approval from MDE to use the ME test code.

Note: The medical emergency does not have to last for the entire testing window. The ME code may be applied for a portion of the window if the student has not started testing when the medical emergency occurs. For example, if the district has scheduled testing for mid-April, but the student’s medical emergency occurred at the end of March and will be in place until mid-May, the ME code could be applied as long as all the criteria listed above are met. However, ME cannot be indicated if a student started the test before the medical emergency; in this situation, the test will be scored as is since the student did participate in some of the test. The district may indicate on the *Test Administration Report (TAR)* that the student was unable finish the test due to the medical emergency.

Table 35. Examples Regarding Medical Excuse

| May Qualify for Medical Excuse with Documentation | Does Not Qualify for Medical Excuse |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Student has been admitted to a hospital or treatment facility for the duration of the testing window and is prohibited from appropriately testing | Pregnancy (unless complications meet the criteria of a medical excuse) |
| Terminal illness or undergoing chemotherapy | Short term or minor illness |
| Traumatic brain injury | A broken limb (but supports or accommodations may be applicable) |
| Comatose | A significant injury and/or illness for a family member or legal guardian |

By definition, it is most likely that medical excuse would apply for only one school year.

Documentation for ME

INFO! Districts must keep documentation when this test code is used, and MDE requires that it contains:

- Documentation from a licensed medical professional indicating why a student coded with a medical excuse could not have appropriately tested. A sample documentation form that can be provided to the medical professional is available in Appendix A. If the district or the medical professional prefer to use their own form, it must include all the information requested in the sample form.
- Documentation of the district decision on why the test code was necessary and could not be administered with other supports or accommodations. **NEW!** The sample form in Appendix A has been updated to include additional information the district completes as part of the documentation.

Districts must keep all documentation on file (including any forms completed by the medical professional or supporting documentation used in the district to verify the criteria have been met) for two years after the end of the academic school year in which testing took place.

Annually after Posttest Editing, MDE will request copies of ME documentation from a sampling of schools that used this test code. Refer to *MDE Review of Medical Excuse Documentation* in Chapter 5 for additional information.

Refer to *Test Codes* at the end of this chapter for more information on indicating the ME code.

Moving Into or Out of the District During Testing

Districts should attempt to test all students who are enrolled during the testing windows. If a student moves into a new district during a testing window and has not tested in their former district, the new district should administer the test to the student.

A student who moves from one district to another near the end of the testing window and has not yet taken the test should be tested if possible.

If a student moves from another state and was administered the other state's English language proficiency and/or standards-based accountability assessments, the student must be tested again in Minnesota if they are enrolled on the first day of the applicable testing window.

Students Moving Prior to Testing

For students who move out of your district before the testing window opens:

- ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS: No action is required for online testing. For paper test materials, securely dispose of the preprinted labels. If labels have already been affixed to the test booklets, return the test booklets to DRC with the Do Not Process labels affixed over them.
- MCA and MTAS: No action required. The student's test eligibility will be removed from PearsonAccess Next once updated enrollment data is submitted indicating that the student is no longer enrolled in the district.

For students who move out of the district after the first day of the testing window but before the test is administered, indicate the NE (not enrolled) test code during Posttest Editing. The NE code will be validated against enrollment data.

Students Completing Part of Assessments

For grades 1–12 ACCESS Online, if a student takes one or more domains in one district and transfers to another district, the new district will complete the remaining domain(s). **INFO!** For grades 1–12 ACCESS Paper and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, the previous district provides the page number where testing stopped to the new district. The first booklet is returned to DRC by the previous district and the student completes the remaining test content at the new district on a new booklet. In all cases, the Student Transfer Form in WIDA AMS must be completed. This will allow the student to finish testing at the new district and ensure the results are merged into one complete student report. Refer to the *ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS Irregularities* posted on the [Minnesota](#) page of the WIDA website for detailed instructions for these situations (WIDA > Minnesota (under Member/State Pages dropdown at the top of the page) > Manuals, Guides and Test Materials expandable heading). The DACs at each district must collaborate to ensure the student does not retake a completed domain.

For MCA or MTAS, if a student moves to a new district and has not started the MCA or MTAS, the student's test eligibility will automatically move once the new district submits updated enrollment data. This information is updated in PearsonAccess Next two business days after submission. No additional action is needed. However, if a student moves to a new district and the test has already been started or completed, the student's test will not automatically move. A report is available in PearsonAccess Next showing student tests that have been started or completed at a different district or school; districts can use this report to verify if they need to contact Pearson to move a started test.

- If the report indicates that the student started the test in another district, contact Pearson to move the test so the student can finish in your district.
- If the report indicates that the student completed the test in another district, no further action is needed.

Refer to the *MCA/MTAS Irregularities* posted on the [Policies and Procedures](#) page of the PearsonAccess Next website for detailed instructions for these situations (PearsonAccess Next > Resources & Training > Policies and Procedures).

Nonpublic Schools (Private Schools)

Nonpublic/private schools are not required to participate in the English language proficiency and standards-based accountability assessments but may choose to participate at a cost (refer to *Cost of Tests for Nonpublic and Home-Schooled Students* at the end of this chapter). Details for nonpublic/private school participation in statewide assessments are available in the *Nonpublic School Participation in Statewide Assessments* document available on the [District Resources](#) page of the MDE website (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > District Resources (under the District Assessment Coordinator Resources expandable heading)).

If a nonpublic/private school chooses to administer any of the statewide assessments, they must follow all test administration and security policies and procedures outlined in this *Procedures Manual* and related resources; this includes completing all required trainings, reviewing the weekly *Assessment Update* emails, and following state-designated testing windows. Nonpublic/private schools that do not adhere to these policies and procedures may be disallowed from participating in future statewide assessments.

Note: Students attending a nonpublic school through an IEP or for care and treatment are reported in enrollment data through the resident district using the State Aid Category of 28. Student information is sent in precode because MDE does not know if it is a permanent or temporary placement for the student. These students are not expected to participate in the English language proficiency or standards-based accountability assessments.

Online Schools (Virtual Schools)

Students enrolled in online schools (School Classification 46), including students attending online programs within districts, must participate in the applicable English language proficiency and standards-based accountability assessments. Because of the technical requirements involved, only district-owned computers/devices can be used for online tests; student-owned computers/devices are not permitted. All security and test administration procedures must be followed even when administering tests in settings outside of a school, and all applicable testing windows must be followed.

It is the online school's responsibility (or the district to which the online program belongs) to administer the test to these students following all required procedures.

- Online schools in different districts may choose to work together to test each other's students.
- In some circumstances, the online school may arrange to have resident districts administer the test to these students. Ultimately, the online school is responsible for having their students take the test, and it is up to the resident district to determine if they will accommodate these requests.
- In any situation where students are participating in a different district, the online school is responsible for the security of any test materials and ensuring that the tests are administered in accordance with all policies and procedures outlined in this *Procedures Manual* and related resources.
- If an online school has reached an agreement with another district, the online school must contact mde.testing@state.mn.us for procedures on administering tests across districts; the DAC of the other district must be copied on the email.

Open Enrollment/Parent Choice Program Students

Districts that enroll students through the open enrollment process should treat those students as if they were district residents, which means the students must participate in applicable English language proficiency and standards-based accountability assessments. The accepting district becomes the *de facto* resident district for open-enrolled students.

Physical Limitations (Temporary)

Sometimes students encounter circumstances immediately before or during testing (for example, a broken arm or concussion) that make it impossible to take a test as usually administered. If such a special circumstance requires the student to have an accommodation (for example, a scribe is needed for a student who breaks their arm, paper test materials are required due to concussion restrictions), the student may use the accommodation (refer to *Providing Accommodations in Injury Situations* in Chapter 4 for additional information). Districts should document the instance on the TAR.

Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) Students

Full-time PSEO students are public school students who attend a postsecondary institution **full time** during testing. These students are reported as PSEO in enrollment data. Districts are responsible for administering the standards-based accountability assessments to these students if they are present when testing is scheduled. If not present, the student's record will appear in PearsonAccess Next, but the student will not test. No further action is needed. Note: If the student was not full-time PSEO for the entire school year (for example, enrolled in a course at the school in the fall) but is full-time PSEO in the spring during testing, a second enrollment record should be created at the time the student becomes full-time PSEO; this ensures that the student is still considered full-time PSEO for testing purposes, and therefore not required to participate if not present.

INFO! However, pending when the next period of enrollment (such as the semester) begins, students may still be considered enrolled at the school on the first day of the testing window and would be expected to test.

In some special cases, districts pay the college directly, and PSEO is not indicated in enrollment data. This creates a discrepancy in Posttest Editing if the student did not participate in testing, and the district will need to submit information to MDE during Posttest Editing to resolve the discrepancy. Detailed information is provided in the *Test WES Posttest Editing User Guide* posted on the [Test WES](#) page of the MDE website (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Business and Finance > Data Submissions > Test WES). The close of Posttest Editing is the deadline for submitting information on these PSEO students.

Students who are part-time PSEO in enrollment data must participate in the standards-based accountability assessments.

For either full-time or part-time PSEO students, if the student is designated as EL in enrollment data, the student must participate in the English language proficiency accountability assessments.

Recently Arrived English Learner (RAEL)

Recently arrived English learner (RAEL) is an identification used primarily for accountability purposes. RAEL is defined as a student who is designated as EL in enrollment data and who first enrolled in a school in one of the 50 states in the United States or the District of Columbia on or after April 15 of the previous school year. Note: A student is eligible to be identified as RAEL only one time.

Students identified as RAEL are required to participate in all subjects of the standards-based accountability assessments, including reading, during their first year of enrollment. Their results are included in test results summary information. These students are also required to participate in the English language proficiency

accountability assessments during their first year of enrollment. Note: English learners who have been enrolled in U.S. schools for less than one year may take the ACCESS Paper. Refer to the *Test Administration Considerations for ACCESS* section in Chapter 8 for more information.

Contact mde.el@state.mn.us for questions on RAEL identification, and contact mde.essa@state.mn.us for accountability questions for RAEL.

Refusal by Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians may refuse to allow their children to participate in the English language proficiency and standards-based accountability assessments.

- A parent/guardian refusal must be submitted to the district in writing before testing, and MDE requires that parent/guardian refusals are documented annually. Parent/guardian refusal documentation must be kept on file for two years after the end of the academic school year in which testing took place. Electronic signatures are acceptable, if allowed by the district.
- In compliance with Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.31, subdivision 4a, MDE provides a form that includes information about statewide testing that parents and guardians may use as documentation if they refuse to have their student participate. The *Statewide Assessments: Parent/Guardian Participation Guide and Refusal Information* is available on the [Students and Families Statewide Testing](#) page of MDE website (MDE > Students and Families > Programs and Initiatives > Statewide Testing > Student Participation). No updates to the form were made for the 2023–24 school year.
 - Districts must post the current year’s complete form on the district website and include it in the district’s student handbook. Posting only a link to the student handbook is not sufficient.
 - Each district determines what specific documentation they require for parent/guardian refusals, and they may require additional/other documentation than the form provided by MDE. Even though districts can choose to use other forms or documentation for refusals, all refusals must be documented annually and in writing.
 - If the district wants to modify the MDE form for their documentation (for example, to request additional information or add district-specific dates), the MDE logo must be removed and it must have the district’s name on it, clearly identifying it as the district’s form. However, the MDE version of the form must still be posted on the district website and included in the student handbook.
- In order for parents/guardians to make fully informed decisions regarding their child’s participation in statewide assessments, districts must provide complete and transparent information when asked by parents/guardians if they can refuse testing; this information must be provided upon request in a timely manner. However, districts are **not** required to send out specific communications regarding parent/guardian refusals. If a district does choose to communicate this information, they should consider including information on how the district uses the information from statewide assessments and the value it provides.
- For students whose parents/guardians refused testing, the school is not required to provide alternative educational opportunities on demand while other students are testing.

While a district may set and communicate a timeline within their district for when they would like parent/guardian refusals to be received, districts must make every attempt to honor the parent/guardian refusal if it is received before the student begins testing. Districts must have a process in place for communicating information to applicable school staff about students who will not be participating in testing due to a parent/guardian refusal. If a student has started or completed the test at the time the parent/guardian refusal is received (or if the refusal was not communicated within the school before the student started testing), the test will be scored as is. The district cannot invalidate the test because the portion the student completed is still valid. However, the district should indicate on the TAR that the parent/guardian's request for refusal could not be honored. The district will determine with the parent/guardian if the automatically generated student report will be provided to the parent/guardian.

The school is required by state and federal law to ensure participation by all eligible students in statewide accountability assessments. A student not participating in the statewide assessments may still be included in some accountability calculations, which has implications at the school and district level for support and recognition opportunities.

Refer to *Test Codes* at the end of this chapter for more information on indicating test codes for parent/guardian refusals: DEC (ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS) and REF-P (MCA and MTAS).

Refusal by Student

Districts may require that students who are unwilling to participate provide written refusal documentation for the English language proficiency and the standards-based accountability assessments. The district may also determine if a student's behavior prevents the student from testing. In the case of behavior, districts can attempt to administer on another day before documenting the refusal. Student refusals are not required to be documented on the TAR, but districts may choose to document the circumstances surrounding student refusals as needed to address questions from parents/guardians or staff during reporting.

If a student has started an assessment and then refuses to finish it, the test will be scored as is since the student did participate in part of the test. The district may choose to indicate on the TAR that the student refused to finish the test in case there are questions, but documentation is not required.

INFO! If students who are 18 years old or older refuse testing, it is documented as a student refusal, and students should not complete the parent/guardian refusal form; that form has language specific to parents/guardians and is intended to be completed by them (and can be, even for students age 18 and older). As with all student refusals, districts determine what documentation they require.

The expectation is that students will participate. Test codes exist for documentation purposes and do not imply MDE condones the behavior. Districts are to address student refusals according to district policy.

Refer to *Test Codes* at the end of this chapter for more information on indicating test codes for student refusals: DEC (ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS) and REF-S (MCA and MTAS).

Retained or Accelerated Students

Students who have been retained are required to participate in the applicable English language proficiency and standards-based accountability assessments for the grade indicated in enrollment data, even though they took the same grade assessment the previous year. For example, if a student participated in the grade 7 Reading and Mathematics MCAs in 2023 and is retained in grade 7 for 2024, the student will take the grade 7 Reading and Mathematics MCAs again, regardless of performance the previous year.

INFO! Similarly, students who are taking accelerated courses are required to participate in the applicable English language proficiency and standards-based accountability assessments for the grade indicated in enrollment data. For example, if a student is enrolled in grade 7 but taking a grade 8 mathematics course, they still participate in the grade 7 Mathematics MCA.

Shared-Time Students (MARSS State Aid Categories = 16, 17, or 18)

Shared-time students are not public school students. These students are enrolled full-time in a nonpublic/private school or are home-schooled and attend public school for one or more classes during the school day.

Regardless of the classes they are taking in the public school, they are not required to participate in the standards-based accountability assessments. If shared-time students will not participate in MCA or MTAS, no action is needed. No test record will be expected if the State Aid Category is correctly indicated in enrollment data. If shared-time students do want to take the MCA or MTAS, they must be manually added using Precode Student Eligibility in Test WES with the Home-Schooled Student enrollment code. More information is available in the *Test WES Precode User Guide* posted on the [Test WES](#) page of the MDE website (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Business and Finance > Data Submissions > Test WES). There is a cost if shared-time students participate, as their participation is not required. See *Cost of Tests for Nonpublic and Home-Schooled Students* at the end of this chapter. The student's results are not included in test results summaries.

Shared-time students who receive eligible EL instruction through the public school and are being reported as EL in enrollment data must take an English language proficiency accountability assessment. These students must be indicated as shared-time in enrollment data. There is no cost for testing because these students are receiving EL instruction and are required to participate.

Special Education Sites, Combined Special Education/Vocational Education Programs

School Classifications 50 and 55 are sites that provide central placement options for students whose resident districts do not have the resources to serve them locally. Students at these sites are placed through an IEP process that has determined the site to be the least restrictive environment. Students at these sites typically come from multiple districts.

Students at these sites must participate in the applicable English language proficiency and standards-based accountability assessments, with the IEP team determining the assessment for which each student is eligible.

Suspended Students

Suspended students who are enrolled in the district are required to participate in the applicable English language proficiency and standards-based accountability assessments. If the student is unable to take the test, the district indicates the ABS (Absent) test code in Test WES during Posttest Editing.

Refer to *Test Codes* at the end of this chapter for more information on the ABS test code.

Transition Programs

INFO! Students enrolled in transition programs must participate in the applicable English language proficiency and standards-based accountability assessments required for their grade.

While a district's student information system may indicate a transition program student as being in grade 12+, for assessment purposes this is considered the same as grade 12 and is scored and reported accordingly. All students in grades K–12 who are identified as EL in student enrollment data must participate in either the ACCESS or WIDA Alternate ACCESS annually, regardless of a student's age or disability.

Tribal-Contract Schools

Tribal-contract schools administer the [Bureau of Indian Education \(BIE\) assessment](#) (BIE website > Academic Success > Assessments & Accountability) and will not be included in Minnesota's accountability system unless they receive a waiver from BIE. If a tribal-contract school wishes to administer both the BIE assessment and a Minnesota statewide assessment or has received a BIE waiver, contact mde.testing@state.mn.us no later than Nov. 1 annually.

Test Codes

INFO! Test codes are used to describe a student's testing status for a given administration year, and the test codes assigned to students who are enrolled on the first day of the testing window determine how they are counted for participation. While test codes are typically referenced as codes to document reasons a student did not participate in the statewide assessment, test codes are also used to represent whether students received valid scores, did not complete enough items to receive a valid score, or had their scores invalidated. Districts must account for all students who were enrolled on the first day of the applicable testing window but did not take an assessment by the end of the window by indicating the applicable test code.

- For ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, there are four test codes available in WIDA AMS and on the test booklets during the testing window: Absent (ABS), Invalid (INV), Declined (DEC; used for both parent and student refusal), and Special Education Deferred (SPD). Because the ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS are designed for all states in the WIDA consortium, some of the Minnesota-specific test codes can only be indicated during Posttest Editing in Test WES. Not Enrolled (NE) and Medical Excuse (ME) are Minnesota-specific test codes and can only be indicated in Posttest Editing.

- For MCA and MTAS, test codes for invalidations, refusals, and medical excuse may be entered in PearsonAccess Next during the testing windows. During Posttest Editing in Test WES, all test codes may be entered.
 - Since blank assessment records cannot be added during Posttest Editing for high school science, any Refusal (REF-P or REF-S) or Medical Excuse (ME) test codes must be entered in PearsonAccess Next during the testing window. Since Absent (ABS) and Not Enrolled (NE) test codes cannot be entered in PearsonAccess Next, the test must be marked complete during the testing window and then the applicable test code added during Posttest Editing.
 - In addition, if a district wants a test code to be assigned to an MTAS record, the test code must be indicated in PearsonAccess Next for MTAS during the testing window. Since Absent (ABS) and Not Enrolled (NE) test codes cannot be entered in PearsonAccess Next, a blank MTAS test for the applicable subject(s) must be submitted during the testing window and the applicable test code added during Posttest Editing. If a district waits until Posttest Editing, a test code can only be added to a blank assessment, which defaults to MCA and cannot be changed to MTAS at that time.
- Test codes may be part of public data requests made to MDE and are available in public data files on the MDE website, which means that districts and schools should be prepared to provide information about the decision-making process used regarding test codes.

The close of Posttest Editing is the deadline for entering test codes.

Note: Extenuating Circumstances (EXC-N, not attempted, and EXC-A, attempted) test codes were available for spring 2020 and spring 2021 test administrations due to COVID-19. These EXC test codes are reserved for use in unique circumstances and are not available for selection.

Absent (ABS)

The student was absent on the testing date for a subject and was unable to make up the test at any time during the entire testing window. This includes students expelled/suspended from school and unable to participate. ABS cannot be indicated if the student took any part of the test. ABS can be indicated during the testing window for ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS but only during Posttest Editing for MCA and MTAS.

Declines (DEC) and Refusals (REF-P and REF-S)

For ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, both parent/guardian and student refusals of testing are indicated with the same test code (DEC for Declined). For MCA and MTAS, there are two different codes based on whether the parent or student is refusing testing (REF-P for parent/guardian refusals and REF-S for student refusals). Declines/refusals can only be indicated if the student has not yet started or completed the test; refer to information earlier in this chapter for details related to parent/guardian and student refusals. Declines/refusals can be indicated during the testing window or during Posttest Editing.

Invalidations (INV)

For ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, one code (INV) is used for all invalidations. There are three different codes listed below for MCA and MTAS invalidations. Invalidations can be indicated during the testing window or

during Posttest Editing. In addition, some invalidations are automatically applied at the end of Posttest Editing based on data validations. Refer to *Validation Against Enrollment and Assessment Records* in Chapter 10 for more information.

The reason for each invalidation must be documented on a TAR. If an invalidation was the result of a security violation, the violation must be reported to MDE through Assessment Security Records (ASR).

Invalidations can be indicated only if the student has already started testing. If the student has not completed at least one item, the district cannot invalidate the test. In the rare situations where the student's test has not been started but should be invalidated, email mde.testing@state.mn.us during the testing window. It is not possible to invalidate a test in this situation once the testing window has closed.

MDE has the authority to require student tests to be invalidated if student or staff actions create a situation that compromises the validity of one or more students' tests.

Invalidation due to Student Action (INV-S)

For MCA and MTAS, INV-S is indicated if a student engages in inappropriate activity or behavior during testing that affects the validity of the student's test. Inappropriate activity or behavior by students includes, but is not limited to: copying from another student, using prohibited aids such as notes, and having prohibited materials out during testing even if not used (like a calculator or text book). Note: Accessing or using prohibited cell phones or devices is a separate code and not indicated as INV-S.

However, a student's test is **not** invalidated if the test is not/has not been started or if it is already completed when the behavior occurs. The validity of the assessment is not affected by the student's behavior in these cases since the behavior occurred at a time when the student was not testing. Similarly, if a student (Student A) provides answers to another student (Student B), Student A's test is not invalidated because the validity of Student A's test is not affected. In this case, Student B's test may need to be invalidated if Student B accepted or used the assistance provided by Student A.

Note: A test should **not** be invalidated if a student rushed through the test, did not appear to be taking the test seriously, or did not complete the test. The test should be scored as is, and information on the situation can be noted on the TAR if the district chooses to document the occurrence in case of questions after testing.

Invalidation due to Device (INV-D)

For MCA and MTAS, INV-D is indicated if a student accesses a cell phone, wearable technology, or other device at any point during test administration (including breaks), even if the student did not use it. The INV-D code is also used in circumstances where test security is violated using a device (such as capturing test content or looking up answers). Refer to *Cell Phone and Device Policy* in Chapter 8 for more information.

Invalidation Other (INV-O)

For MCA and MTAS, INV-O is indicated for misadministrations or other situations, including staff actions, which compromise the validity of a student's results. Inappropriate activity or behavior by staff includes, but is not limited to: giving answers or unauthorized help or cues to students, making any attempt to improve a student's test score or altering a student's response, allowing prohibited materials in the testing room or on a student's

desk, leaving the room unattended during testing, or allowing students to leave the room unattended during testing.

Medical Excuse (ME)

An ME code is indicated for students unable to take the test because of a medical emergency that has been officially documented at the district. A medical emergency is defined as a debilitating onset of a severe or life-threatening physical or mental illness, infection, injury, disease, and/or emotional trauma. ME is to be used only for students unable to test at all. Refer to detailed information earlier in this chapter, including the criteria for determining a medical emergency. ME can be indicated during the testing window for MCA and MTAS and/or during Posttest Editing for all assessments.

Not Enrolled (NE)

An NE code is indicated if the student was not enrolled when the test was administered in the district. Do not use NE if a student started their test. NE can only be indicated during Posttest Editing.

Districts determine when tests will be administered and must attempt to test all students who are enrolled during and after those testing dates. Students may be enrolled when one subject is administered and not enrolled for another depending on when testing is scheduled in the district.

Special Education Deferred (SPD)

For ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS only, Special Education Deferred (SPD) indicates that an IEP or 504 team determined that a student should defer participation from one or more of the domains of the test. It can be indicated during the testing window or during Posttest Editing.

English learners with disabilities should participate in as many domains of the ACCESS or WIDA Alternate ACCESS as possible. SPD cannot be used to exempt a student from taking a test. If the student's disability is such that they cannot participate in any domains of the ACCESS with accommodations, the IEP team and EL staff should consider the WIDA Alternate ACCESS. If it is impossible to administer a domain due to the student's disability (for example, the Listening domain for a deaf student), indicate the SPD code for that domain. If the EL staff and the IEP team determine that the SPD code is appropriate for more than two domains, contact MDE at mde.testing@state.mn.us for approval to use the code for more than two domains.

Summary of Test Codes

Table 36 provides a summary of the test codes that can be indicated on student tests.

Table 36. Summary of Test Codes

| Code | Test Status | Enter During Testing Window | Enter in Posttest Editing ¹¹ |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| ABS | Not started | Yes for ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS (in WIDA AMS or in test booklet) No for MCA/MTAS | Yes |
| DEC (ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS) | Not started | Yes (in WIDA AMS or in test booklet) | Yes |
| INV (ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS) | Started or completed | Yes (in WIDA AMS or on test booklet) | Yes |
| INV-S, INV-D, INV-O (MCA/MTAS) | Started or completed | Yes (in PearsonAccess Next) | Yes |
| ME | Not started | Yes (in PearsonAccess Next) | Yes |
| NE | Not started | No | Yes |
| REF-P and REF-S (MCA/MTAS) | Not started | Yes (in PearsonAccess Next) | Yes |
| SPD (ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS) | Not started | Yes (in WIDA AMS or on test booklet) | Yes |

¹¹ Any refusal or medical excuse test codes for high school science must be entered in PearsonAccess Next during the testing window; absent and not enrolled test codes cannot be entered in either PearsonAccess Next or Posttest Editing for high school science. Similarly, if the district wants a test code to be assigned to an MTAS record, it is important that the test code is indicated in PearsonAccess Next for MTAS.

Cost of Tests for Nonpublic and Home-Schooled Students

The test materials, scoring, and results for the Minnesota English language proficiency and standards-based accountability assessments are provided at no cost to public school districts testing public school students. Review Table 37 for 2023–24 testing costs for nonpublic and home-schooled students.

Service providers will invoice nonpublic schools directly. Pearson will invoice the district for any home-schooled or shared-time students participating in the district’s MCA or MTAS testing, and the district may then request payment from the parent/guardian.

The English language proficiency and standards-based accountability assessments meet the definition of a standardized test under Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.41, which means nonpublic pupil textbook aid may be used by the nonpublic school or home school to pay for this testing.

Table 37. 2023–24 Cost of Tests for Nonpublic and Home-Schooled Students

| Test | Per Student Cost |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Kindergarten ACCESS | \$30.75 + processing fee ¹² |
| Grades 1–12 ACCESS Paper (except braille) | \$30.75 + processing fee ¹² |
| Grades 1–12 braille ACCESS | \$187.75 + processing fee ¹² |
| Grades 1–12 ACCESS Online | \$28.75 + processing fee ¹² |
| WIDA Alternate ACCESS | \$141.25 + processing fee ¹² |
| MCA (reading, mathematics, science) | \$6.36 per subject for online tests \$6.55 per subject for paper tests |
| MTAS (reading, mathematics, science) | \$56.91 |

¹² Cost noted above is per student (includes test materials, scoring, and basic reporting services), plus an additional 3 percent processing fee (minimum \$25, maximum \$600). DRC is the contact for ordering and invoicing information.

Chapter 10 — After Test Administration

Overview

This chapter includes general information related to tasks that are completed after test administration, including the return of test materials and Posttest Editing.

Collection and Return of Secure Test Materials

When testing has been completed, Test Administrators and Test Monitors must verify that all secure test materials are accounted for before returning them to the District or School Assessment Coordinator. While some secure materials must be returned to the service providers, others can be securely disposed of at the district. Detailed information, including the specific materials that must be returned and what can be securely disposed of, are provided in service provider resources. In general, secure materials have a security number assigned to them for tracking and must be returned.

- For ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, this information is provided in the *Test Coordinator Manual* in the [WIDA Secure Portal](#).
- For MCA and MTAS, this information is provided with the shipment of test materials and posted to the [User Guides](#) page of the PearsonAccess Next website (PearsonAccess Next > Resources & Training > User Guides).

Refer to the *Important Dates* section at the beginning of this manual for the date by which secure test materials must be shipped to service providers. The District or School Assessment Coordinator is responsible for collecting, packaging, and preparing all test materials for return. Note: For ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, it is critical that the deadline for returning paper materials is followed to ensure that all paper tests can be scanned and scored before data is provided to MDE. If the deadline is missed, early student-level results may not be available for making decisions about instruction and placement, assessment records may not be provided for Posttest Editing, scores may not be available for accountability calculations, and an Individual Student Report (ISR) may not be provided in the shipment of reports.



For ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, ship back all scorable paper test materials by the deadline. If missed, student tests may not be included for Posttest Editing and reporting.

For MCA and MTAS, it is critical that the student's responses are entered in TestNav (for paper MCA) or PearsonAccess Next (for MTAS) prior to returning the materials as Pearson does not scan and score paper tests.

“Securely dispose” is defined as destroying materials so they are no longer intact and legible. This can be done through shredding or incineration. Each district determines the procedure to follow, including which staff will be responsible for the secure disposal (such as collected in the office or securely disposed of by each Test Monitor). The secure disposal must be completed no more than two business days after the close of the testing window. Note: The district may, at their discretion, use a contracted shredding service to dispose of secure materials as

long as the shredding is completed within the required timeframe and the service has processes for handling highly sensitive material (such as personnel records).

Missing Secure Test Materials

If secure test materials are missing at any point while in the district or school’s possession (whether identified at the district/school or by the service provider after materials are returned), the District Assessment Coordinator (DAC) must take action to search for materials and collect documentation on the chain of custody or procedure the district follows to track secure materials. Table 38 outlines the actions taken, based on the circumstances surrounding the missing materials and whether they are located.

Table 38. Actions to Take for Missing Secure Test Materials

| Circumstance | District Action |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Materials missing because of a known circumstance (for example, inadvertently shredded at the school, never received in shipment) | <p>The DAC contacts the service provider and provides the missing materials’ security numbers. The service provider records the status of the materials and requests any additional documentation. Refer to <i>Defective or Damaged Test Materials</i> in Chapter 8 for more information.</p> <p>The DAC documents circumstances caused by the district (such as shredding) on a <i>Test Administration Report</i> (TAR).</p> |
| Materials missing during testing window and status is unknown | <p>School staff notify the DAC that materials are missing. The DAC works with the school to account for the missing materials, following the chain of custody.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If materials are found, determine if they were ever left unsecured (for example, left out in a classroom) or always kept secured (for example, locked in someone’s desk). If unsecured at any point while missing, the DAC submits a security violation through Assessment Security Records (ASR). • If materials are not found when all other secure materials are returned, the DAC continues to work with the school to locate missing test materials. If materials are not located, the service provider and MDE will follow up and request additional documentation (refer to next row). |
| Materials missing after the close of the testing window | <p>The service providers and MDE will follow up with the DAC and superintendent/director on missing materials.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If materials are found, determine if they were ever left unsecured (for example, left out in a classroom) or always kept secured (for example, locked in someone’s desk). If unsecured at any point while missing, the DAC submits a security violation through the ASR. • If materials have not been found, the DAC must provide an account as requested by the service provider or MDE. |

| Circumstance | District Action |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If materials have not been found and the DAC has not provided an account for their loss after a reasonable period following the return deadline, MDE will submit a security violation through the ASR on behalf of the district. |

Since the return of secure materials occurs close to the end of the school year, DACs will need to develop a process with their schools to ensure all test materials are returned. If the DAC is not available to respond to communication requests from the service provider or MDE over the summer, another staff member, such as an administrator, can be designated as alternate DAC for the duration. They must be aware of the chain of custody in order to assist in locating missing materials during that time. If missing test materials are located at a much later point in time, the DAC should contact the service provider and MDE for instructions on returning those materials.

Posttest Editing

After testing is completed, DACs edit student assessment records (as needed) through Posttest Editing in Test WES. Posttest Editing in Test WES is a critical task completed annually for the English language proficiency and standards-based accountability assessments.

The ultimate goal of Posttest Editing is to have each student’s enrollment record accurately connected to the assessment records for each test the student has taken. In order to connect these records, it is important that the student’s enrollment record is accurate in the student enrollment data submitted to MDE. It is also important to verify or correct student information on assessment records to ensure that final data, including ISRs provided to families, are based on accurate and complete information.



Districts must account for all students who were enrolled on the first day of the testing window and did not test by indicating the applicable test code. **INFO!** This includes students who were enrolled but identified as English learners after the first day of the ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS testing window. Note: Minnesota Standardized English Learner Procedures require a district to complete the identification process within two weeks for students who enroll after the beginning of the school year. For more information, refer to the [English Learner Education](#) page of the MDE website (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > English Learner Education).

Test scores are not available during this period but attempt status is indicated for all assessment records (refer to *Valid Score Rules* in Chapter 6). Under District Confirmations in Test WES, DACs indicate either that they have completed Posttest Editing or that no edits were needed for their district.

Nonpublic schools can participate in Posttest Editing, but in a limited way since enrollment data is not submitted to MDE; however, test codes can be added or changed, and student information on the assessment record can be updated.

Refer to the *Test WES Posttest Editing User Guide* available on the [Test WES](#) page of the MDE website for additional information (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Business and Finance > Data Submissions > Test WES).

Validation Against Enrollment and Assessment Records

Validation Against Enrollment Records

When determining if a student's information should be sent in precode for testing and for Posttest Editing, MDE uses the Status Begin and End Dates of the student's enrollment record to verify if a student was enrolled. Often a student's Status End Date is later than the actual date the student stopped attending school.

During Posttest Editing, student assessments will also be validated against their enrollment record submitted to MDE. Students taking the WIDA Alternate ACCESS or MTAS must be designated as receiving special education services in enrollment data or the reported score code will be invalidated. Similarly, students taking the ACCESS or WIDA Alternate ACCESS must be designated as EL. If a district does not make a correction in the enrollment data during Posttest Editing, there is no way to remove the invalidation once Posttest Editing is over.

Grade is also validated against student enrollment records during Posttest Editing. For example, if a student takes a grade 6 test, but enrollment data is updated after testing to show the student as enrolled in grade 7, the student's test record will receive a wrong grade (WG) score code instead of a score. This situation may also require a correction in the enrollment data submitted to MDE during Posttest Editing.

Validation Against Assessment Records

Students must take only one assessment per domain/subject (such as Reading MCA or Reading MTAS) for the grades in which they are enrolled. The assessment a student is to take must be identified prior to a student testing. If a student has two test records for the same subject (WIDA Alternate ACCESS and ACCESS or MCA and MTAS), the most accommodated test (WIDA Alternate ACCESS or MTAS) becomes the test used for final reporting purposes.

If a student inadvertently takes the incorrect assessment, the incorrect assessment must be invalidated (using the INV test code for ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS and INV-O for MCA/MTAS). If discovered during the testing window, the student then takes the correct assessment. The assessment with the valid score will be used for final reporting purposes.

ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS Requests

After testing is completed, districts may make requests to MDE regarding the circumstances described below; if approved by MDE, the request is sent to WIDA and DRC. The fee associated with these requests varies by the type of request.

Test Booklet Search Requests

A test booklet search can be requested when a student's score was not included in early student-level results and it is suspected that a completed test booklet had 1) a district/school label but no student information bubbled in pencil, 2) bubbled student information but no district/school label, or 3) a Do Not Process Label applied.

The cost for a test booklet search may be up to \$200 per test booklet. DACs must email mde.testing@state.mn.us when they believe a test booklet search may be needed.

Transcription Requests

A transcription request may be submitted if there is a concern that a student or Test Administrator did not use a Number 2 pencil to complete any portion of the test items (for example, a pen, highlighter, or marker was used) or if a student or Test Administrator did not completely fill in the bubble or answer area (for example, hash marks, check marks, slashes, or dashes were used to indicate responses in the answer bubbles).

The cost for a transcription request may be up to \$250 per test booklet, plus possible additional shipping costs. DACs must email mde.testing@state.mn.us when they believe a transcription request may be needed.

Scoring Appeal Requests

Scoring appeals may be requested for either the Writing (paper or online) or Speaking (online only) domains of the grades 1–12 ACCESS when there is a concern that a student's test may have been scored incorrectly. DACs must email mde.testing@state.mn.us with the student's MARSS/SSID number and the rationale for the scoring appeal. MDE will do an initial review and provide information to the district. If the district chooses to move forward with the scoring appeal, after final results are available (in the DSR/SSR files), MDE will approve the request and send to DRC. There may be a \$200 fee. Note: While an initial request about a scoring appeal can be sent to MDE once early student-level results are available for the initial review, the official request cannot be sent until after final results are available to ensure edits made during Posttest Editing are reflected.

Scoring appeals cannot be requested for Reading or Listening scores, or if a test code was indicated for any domain. Scoring appeals are not applicable for Kindergarten ACCESS or WIDA Alternate ACCESS because they contain multiple-choice items only and are scored by the Test Administrator.

Data Corrections (After Posttest Editing)

A data correction can be requested for rare issues that are not correctly resolved following Posttest Editing in Test WES (for example, test records were not merged correctly or test/Do Not Score codes were not correctly resolved).

The cost for a data correction may be up to \$100 per test. DACs must email mde.testing@state.mn.us with the student's MARSS/SSID number, after final results are available (in DSR/SSR files), when they believe a data correction may be needed.

Late Score Entry of MCA Student Responses or MTAS Data

If student responses in MCA paper test materials or MTAS data are not entered during the testing windows, districts can contact Pearson to arrange for a late score entry. A late score entry can be requested when some student responses or scores were entered during the testing window (NC or not complete score code) or when there is no test record or a not attempted (NA) score code.

There is a \$200 fee for late score entry for up to 10 students after the close of the testing window. The *Request for Late Score Entry Form* in Appendix A includes instructions regarding the return of late score entry materials.

Depending on when requests are submitted to Pearson, late score entries may or may not be entered in time for the district to verify the records during Posttest Editing or for the records to be included in the final results or accountability calculations. Note: If test materials containing the student responses have already been returned to Pearson, contact Pearson as soon as possible. Materials that have already been shipped back by the district using the normal return process are sent to Pearson's warehouse, and Pearson will work with warehouse staff to identify and gather these materials. There is no guarantee, however, that the materials will be located and entered in time for Posttest Editing.

MCA Rescores

A rescore may be requested when a parent/guardian or school district staff disagrees with the final score a student received (typically for an MCA paper administration). Note: Items for online administrations are reviewed multiple times before and during testing for scoring accuracy and unanticipated responses. Because of MDE's rigorous item review process, a rescore is highly unlikely to result in a score change for an individual student. If a discrepancy is found for an online item during a scoring review, scores will be updated for all affected students.

Parents/guardians should work with the school district to initiate a rescore. DACs must email mde.testing@state.mn.us with the student's MARSS/SSID number and the rationale for requesting a rescore, and MDE will review the request. If approved, further information will be collected. The cost for rescoring a test is \$125 per test.

A rescore does not include test or score code changes (INV, NC, etc.) or the late entry of student responses for paper test materials or the MTAS. Any questions regarding a test code must be addressed during Posttest Editing.

Chapter 11 — Statewide Assessment Results

Assessment results are the final component of statewide assessments and are used by schools and districts as part of their comprehensive assessment systems.

Assessment results for individual students, schools, districts, and the state are distributed to a variety of audiences through different formats. This chapter gives an overview of these assessment reports and results for the standards-based and English language proficiency accountability assessments, clarifies the appropriate uses of results available in service provider systems, and provides information about other reporting resources for the interpretation of results.

When considering whether a test is “valid,” keep in mind that it is the interpretations of the results that are evaluated for validity. In the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (2014), validity is defined as the degree to which evidence and theory support the interpretation of test scores for proposed uses of tests. In other words, an assessment is valid if it measures what it claims to measure. The Minnesota statewide assessments were developed to determine if, and to what extent, students have learned the applicable standards. Additionally, there are rigorous statistical checks and validation processes used every year to ensure that all statewide assessments reliably measure what they are designed to measure. Therefore, when assessments are administered in a way that allows students to independently demonstrate what they know, the scores represent a valid and accurate snapshot of student learning of the grade-level content standards, or their level of proficiency in academic English, at the time students test.



An assessment is valid when its results are used to support a claim matching its design. Statewide assessments are designed to measure learning of the standards.

Overview of Secure Systems and Available Reports

Results for the standards-based accountability assessments (MCA and MTAS) and English language proficiency accountability assessments (ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS) are available in secure MDE and service provider systems, as well as provided publicly. Table 39 provides an overview of the available results, which are described in more detail in the following sections. The [Important Dates for Results Release](#), which provides the specific dates when results will be available, are published separately on PearsonAccess Next (PearsonAccess Next > Resources & Training > Policies and Procedures). Refer to *Use of Results from Service Provider Systems* later in this chapter for information on why results provided by MDE are considered the official results.

NEW! Beginning in 2022–23, MDE is now reporting student results using eight state-defined racial and ethnic groups, including the use of the state definition of American Indian and the new Other Indigenous group. Students count as American Indian if they meet the state definition regardless of any other racial or ethnic groups with which they may have identified. The state of Minnesota’s definition of American Indian includes any of the original people within what is now the borders of the United States (excluding Hawaii) or Canada who maintain cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition.

Table 39. Assessment Results at a Glance

| Category | Name of Results | Assessments | Location of Results | When Available |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Individual student-level results (secure; current year) | On-Demand Reports | MCA and MTAS | PearsonAccess Next | Within 60 minutes after submitting the test or data entry is completed |
| | Early Student-Level Results ¹³ | ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS | Test WES | In summer |
| | District and School Student Results (DSR and SSR) files | ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS MCA and MTAS | Assessment Secure Reports on MDE website | In summer; embargoed until public release |
| | Individual Student Reports (ISRs) and rosters ¹⁴ | ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS MCA and MTAS | WIDA AMS PearsonAccess Next | When final assessment results are released publicly |
| Individual student-level results (secure; historical) | Student Assessment History Report | ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS MCA and MTAS | Assessment Secure Reports on MDE website | When student's enrollment is submitted to MDE; includes final assessment results |
| | Historical Student Data | MCA and MTAS | PearsonAccess Next | When final assessment results are released publicly |
| Summary results (secure) | Test Results Summary | ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS MCA and MTAS | Assessment Secure Reports on MDE website | In summer; embargoed until public release |
| | District and School Frequency Reports ¹⁵ | ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS | WIDA AMS | When final assessment results are released publicly |
| | Longitudinal Reports | MCA and MTAS | PearsonAccess Next | When final assessment results are released publicly |
| | Benchmark Reports | MCA | PearsonAccess Next | In fall |

¹³ Due to 2023–24 being the first operational administration of the updated WIDA Alternate ACCESS, reporting will be delayed, and early student-level results will not be provided this year.

¹⁴ In addition to the electronic versions provided in service provider systems, paper copies of ISRs for distribution to families are shipped to districts; for MCA/MTAS, districts may elect to receive electronic versions only. Refer to *Individual Student Reports* later in this chapter.

¹⁵ In addition to the electronic versions provided in WIDA AMS, paper copies are also shipped to districts.

| Category | Name of Results | Assessments | Location of Results | When Available |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Summary results (secure) | Alternate Assessment Participation | MTAS | Assessment Secure Reports on MDE website | In fall |
| Summary results (public) | How Well are Students Doing? | ACCESS MCA and MTAS | Minnesota Report Card on MDE website | When final assessment results are released publicly |
| | Assessment Files | ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS MCA and MTAS | Data Reports and Analytics on MDE website | When final assessment results are released publicly |
| | Subscore Report | MCA | PearsonAccess Next website (nonsecure) | When final assessment results are released publicly |

Assessment Secure Reports

Reports provided by multiple divisions at MDE are available on the [Secure Reports](#) page of the MDE website (MDE > Data Center > Secure Reports). Final assessment results are available in the reports under the Assessment Secure Reports heading. User guides for each report are available on each report’s page, as well as on MDE’s [Assessment Secure Reports](#) page of the MDE website (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Business and Finance > Data Submissions > Assessment Secure Reports). These user guides provide detailed information about the data included in each report. For more information on access to MDE systems, refer to Chapter 1.

- **Alternate Assessment Participation:** This report provides the district’s historical MTAS participation rates and includes comparison data to similar districts and statewide. It is used to assist districts in completing the [Assurance, Rationale, and Context \(ARC\)](#) on an annual basis (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > Minnesota Tests > MTAS Participation).
 - The report should be used by districts as part of conversations around how eligibility is determined for MTAS participation.
 - The ARC is meant to guide district staff to reflect on their data and practices so that they can create guidance for IEP teams regarding eligibility; it is not intended to mandate districts reduce participation rates on MTAS.
- **District and School Student Results (DSR and SSR):** The DSR and SSR files provide schools and districts with final student-level data on Minnesota’s statewide assessments as official results. These files contain all the student-level data for the standards-based and English language proficiency accountability assessments, including demographic information, achievement level information, and test scores.
 - These files can be analyzed to make data-driven decisions at the school and district levels in context with other information available at the local level.
 - The data can be opened in Excel or tab-delimited text files and can be imported into a student information system.

- Information about the contents and structure, including the location and contents of each field in the file, are contained in the user guide.
- **Student Assessment History Report:** This report allows districts to access state assessment test history for students using student enrollment data submitted to MDE. Note: The report is only available at the beginning of the school year after the district submits enrollment data for the new school year to MDE.
 - Student testing history can be accessed for an individual student or for multiple students at a time.
 - Results include historical test records, including the standards-based and English language proficiency accountability assessments.
- **Test Results Summary:** The Test Results Summary reports provide schools and districts final summary data, including state summary data for the standards-based and English language proficiency accountability assessments.
 - Summary reports can be generated at the district or school level, and multiple filter options are available. The report information generated can be printed in a PDF format or downloaded in Excel or tab-delimited text files.
 - The functionality of the Test Results Summary allows users to generate tables and graphs that may be used to present summarized test results to district and school staff. This may be especially useful during the embargo, before similar functionality is available publicly on the Minnesota Report Card website. In addition, because it is a secure report, there are no student privacy protection rules based on the number of students, so summary results for student groups with small numbers are available.
 - These reports can be used in context with other information available at the local level to make data-driven decisions at the school and district levels.

Results in WIDA Systems

When final results are released publicly, the following reports for ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS are available to district-level users in [WIDA AMS](#):

- District and School Student Response File: A data file containing student-level data for all tested students, primarily used for importing into student information systems or data warehouses.
- Individual Student Reports: Electronic copies of ISRs, which are described in more detail later in this chapter.
- Student Roster Reports: Overview reports on the performances of students within a single school and grade that includes individual student scale scores and proficiency levels for each language domain and composite area, as well as tier and grade-level cluster information.
- District and School Frequency Reports: High-level reports for a single grade within a school, district, or state on the number and percentage of tested students who achieved each proficiency level for each language domain and composite area.
- Translated Student Reports: Translated versions of ISRs, generated for individual students.

Refer to *Use of Results from Service Provider Systems* later in this chapter for more information about using these results.

WIDA provides resources on the [ACCESS for ELLs Scores and Reports](#) (WIDA > Assess > ACCESS for ELLs > ACCESS for ELLs Scores & Reports) and [Alternate ACCESS Scores and Reports](#) (WIDA > Assess > Alternate ACCESS for ELLs > Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Scores & Reports) pages of the WIDA website, including:

- Interpretive Guides for Score Reports
- Family engagement resources, including parent-friendly guides, flyers, and videos
- Lesson plans and Speaking and Writing rubrics
- Resources for educators

NEW! As the first operational administration of the updated WIDA Alternate ACCESS will take place this year, additional details about related reports and resources for 2023–24 will be provided as they are made available from WIDA.

The WIDA Data Dashboard is an interactive site used to view aggregated analytical information for ACCESS at the consortium level. The Data Dashboard provides data at the consortium level; official results for Minnesota are available in the [Minnesota Report Card](#) website under How Well are Students Doing > Are English Learners Progressing. Districts can access the Data Dashboard through the [WIDA Secure Portal](#). While percentile growth information is available for the consortium, those calculations focus on how much students improved on ACCESS compared to other students. MDE considers a growth measure that relies on comparisons to other students to be inappropriate for a criterion-referenced test. MDE instead recommends using a progress calculation that looks at the change in scale scores between years, along with the associated change in proficiency level, as a more appropriate measure to use. Refer to the *Guidebook: Exploring ACCESS for ELLs Data* located on the [District Resources](#) page (under the Test Score Interpretation Resources expandable heading) for additional information on using ACCESS results.

Results in PearsonAccess Next

In PearsonAccess Next, MCA and MTAS data are available at the student, school, district, and state levels, depending on the type of report accessed and the user role. District- and school-level users have access to all available results for their organization; teachers must have student reporting groups assigned to them in order to access available results. Refer to *Use of Results from Service Provider Systems* later in this chapter for more information about using these results.

Reporting resources and user guides for PearsonAccess Next are available on the [Additional Reporting Resources](#) page of the PearsonAccess Next website (PearsonAccess Next > Reporting Resources > Additional Reporting Resources).

On-Demand Reports

On-Demand Reports provide preliminary student scores for MCA and MTAS within 60 minutes after testing or data entry is completed, and they are available until final results are released. Districts may share these preliminary result reports with students, families, and staff for instructional purposes only, but preliminary

results cannot be shared publicly. Results in On-Demand Reports can be exported as a data file, downloaded in a list report, or generated as PDFs (Student Detail Reports) for individual students. Reporting groups can be created and assigned to teachers to provide them access to these reports.

Longitudinal Reports

Longitudinal Reports provide a graphical display of historical results for review and comparison at the student, school, district, and/or state level by administration, performance, and student group. Results in Longitudinal Reports are available to school- or district-level users only. There is also an option to export longitudinal results in Excel format.

Historical Student Data

Historical test results are available in Historical Student Data for students who previously tested in the district and for students who are currently enrolled in the district, regardless of where they tested. Student reporting groups can be created and assigned to teachers to provide them access to this data. Note: Students who transferred to another district after testing will not be included in Historical Student Data at the beginning of the school year for the new district; their results will be available once student enrollment information is sent to Pearson in late November.

Published Reports

Published Reports include PDF versions of final reports that are delivered to districts (rosters and electronic copies of ISRs), Benchmark Reports, and other reports available for district and school staff (including the secure materials status report, video ISR link spreadsheet, and testing time reports). Results in Published Reports are available to school- or district-level users only.

Results in Test WES

MDE provides early student-level results for ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS to allow districts to make decisions about instruction or placement. These results are available in an Excel file that can be downloaded from Test WES. Early results are not updated during Posttest Editing, and are only available until final results are provided following Posttest Editing in Assessment Secure Reports in the summer. Refer to the help document posted on the [Test WES](#) page of the MDE website for additional information (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Business and Finance > Data Submissions > Test WES). **NEW!** Due to 2023–24 being the first operational administration of the updated WIDA Alternate ACCESS, early results will not be provided this year for this assessment. Early results for the ACCESS will still be provided.

SIS and Data Warehouse Vendor Access to Results

Student Information System (SIS) and Data Warehouse vendors have the opportunity to receive regularly scheduled extracts of preliminary results data for MCA/MTAS during the testing window from Pearson, and final data from MDE for both ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS and MCA/MTAS on behalf of their member districts. This allows SIS and Data Warehouse vendors to load the data directly into their system for access by school districts that enter into a data sharing agreement with their associated vendor(s) and MDE. Vendors must annually confirm participation in the fall and collect data sharing agreements in order to receive the data. Refer

to the [Data Extracts](#) page of the MDE website for more information, including information on how vendors can participate (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > Data Extracts).

Use of Results from Service Provider Systems

The following section explains why data in service provider systems (WIDA AMS for ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, PearsonAccess Next for MCA and MTAS) must **not** be used for official assessment reporting and accountability purposes. All official assessment and accountability data are provided by MDE. Note: While WIDA Alternate ACCESS early results will not be provided this year, information about how they are typically included in the process is included in the remainder of this chapter.



While data is provided in service provider systems for a variety of uses within the district, remember that official data are provided by MDE.

Preliminary Student-Level Results

For ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, an Excel file of early student-level results is provided in Test WES. However, districts should not use this file to calculate school or district summaries to share with the public. Early results are not final; while the score of the student is final (except in very special circumstances), actions taken during Posttest Editing (for example, districts making changes to student information, or validations against student enrollment data to confirm EL designations) could affect final results. Note: The early results file is a static file, which means that it is not updated as changes are made in Posttest Editing.

For MCA and MTAS, preliminary student-level results in On-Demand Reports and Exports are available in PearsonAccess Next within 60 minutes after testing or data entry completion. These results in PearsonAccess Next are considered preliminary for the following reasons:

- For MCA, periodic reviews of scoring and student responses are conducted, which could result in score changes.
 - All items are reviewed multiple times before and during testing to ensure they are scored and functioning correctly.
 - In a process called adjudication, student responses to technology-enhanced items are reviewed multiple times during and after testing so that any unanticipated responses are considered.
- Test administration situations (such as test invalidations or misadministrations) could lead to changes from the preliminary results.
- MCA and MTAS assessment data go through Posttest Editing in Test WES before final reports are generated, and changes made during this process (for example, districts making changes to student information, or validations against student enrollment data to confirm special education designations) could lead to final results that differ from the preliminary results available in On-Demand Reports.

Districts may share preliminary results with students, families, and staff for instructional purposes, but results cannot be shared publicly. It is up to the district to determine how preliminary student results will be shared.

- With ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, it is appropriate to use the preliminary results to make individual student reclassification and exiting decisions. However, for all statewide tests, it is recommended to wait until final test results are available to make data-based decisions about curriculum and instruction, in context with other district and school information. In addition, for other purposes (such as grant applications, state/federal reporting requirements), the final assessment results provided by MDE must be used.
- Preliminary student assessment results must not be discussed in public forums (for example, on social media), reflected in public meeting minutes (for example, school board meetings), or shared with the general public or media until the final assessment results have been released publicly.
 - This includes any summarization or accountability calculations determined by the district. Until results are publicly released by MDE, the Minnesota legislature classifies the school performance data as nonpublic, according to Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.36.
 - If sharing preliminary results with staff, ensure that staff understand that “abiding by the embargo” means that they cannot discuss or share results with others or the general public before the public release of results.
 - Note: Individually-identifying student results must not be shared publicly at any point, as required under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations. Student-level results may only be shared with those who have a legitimate educational interest or others who are permitted by the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (MGDPA) or FERPA to have access to this private educational data. Refer to *Sharing Student Information in the School and District* later in this chapter for more information.
- While preliminary results can be shared with school board members, school officials, and charter school authorizers, all requirements outlined in *Sharing Students’ Private Information and Results Outside the School and District* (later in this chapter) must be followed, including collection and retention of nondisclosure agreements for sharing results. Note: The requirement for a data privacy and nondisclosure agreement is specific to school officials and not all district and school staff. Districts should follow their district data privacy policies and procedures for district and school staff who have access to embargoed results.

Final Results

Final results are loaded into Published Reports, Longitudinal Reports, and Historical Student Data for MCA and MTAS only one time after Posttest Editing, so changes made or assessments loaded after (such as straggler records) will only appear in data in MDE systems. Similarly, ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS assessment data also go through Posttest Editing in Test WES, and while the majority of this data is provided to WIDA, there may be differences in the results. For example, any assessment records created during Posttest Editing (such as blank records where a test code was entered for all domains) are only reported by MDE. In addition, how data is presented in WIDA AMS may be different compared to how it is presented in MDE’s systems and websites.

Process for the Release of Final Assessment and Accountability Results

In an effort to provide a more comprehensive message to the public about the North Star accountability system established under ESSA, MDE publicly releases assessment and accountability results together. The intent is to provide greater context around results and improve public understanding of how Minnesota schools are held accountable under state and federal law.

INFO! Accountability calculations based on assessment results are part of the North Star accountability system, but they are not the entirety of the system. Other data, including for graduation and consistent attendance, provide additional insights about schools. While MDE uses these indicators in a particular way when identifying schools for support every three years, the annual release of results is not meant to prioritize any specific indicator or indicators. Taking this approach allows members of the public to use their own judgment when determining which indicators are most relevant to their individual priorities.

The general process for the release of final assessment and accountability results in a typical year is as follows.

1. Embargoed final district assessment results are available for district review in Assessment Secure Reports (beginning with DSR/SSR files and then Test Results Summary reports).
2. Embargoed district accountability results are available for district review in Accountability Secure Reports, and districts have an opportunity to submit an appeal of their accountability results.
3. Embargoed statewide summary accountability results are provided to districts shortly before they are provided to the media and for public release.
4. When MDE lifts the embargo, final assessment and accountability results are made available publicly on the Minnesota Report Card and the Data Reports and Analytics pages of the MDE website (summary level data). Assessment results are also available in service provider systems (PearsonAccess Next and WIDA AMS), and Individual Student Reports (ISRs) are provided to districts for distribution to families.

Note: Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.36 require MDE to treat all school performance data the department receives, collects, or creates as nonpublic data (meaning not accessible to the public) until it is released publicly by the commissioner.

The following sections provide further information about the release of final assessment results. For more information about accountability results, go to the [School and District Accountability](#) page of the MDE website (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > School Achievement > School and District Accountability) or email mde.essa@state.mn.us.

Embargoed Final Assessment Results

When final assessment results are released through Assessment Secure Reports, they are embargoed until released publicly. Final assessment results include the DSR and SSR files (student-level data) and Test Results Summary reports (district- and school-level data) described under *Assessment Secure Reports* above.

Reminder! All assessment results are embargoed until the MDE public release of results.



During the embargo, districts can use the final assessment results for data retreats and to prepare for questions from the media and local community partners. This means that districts may share the results with district teachers and staff, but **these final assessment results cannot be shared publicly**.

Individual student results can be shared with parents/guardians and students for instructional purposes. This includes sharing individual student results with students and families through a secure student/family portal as long as no summary results are available. In addition, preliminary or final individual student scores may be shared with educational institutions (such as for a PSEO application, enrollment in a new school outside of the district, or college course enrollment) as long as no summary results are provided; if the results being provided are preliminary, this should be noted. Under FERPA regulations, individually-identifying student results cannot be shared publicly at any point.

Final assessment summary results, including participation information, should not be discussed in public forums (for example, on social media), posted online, or reflected in public meeting minutes (for example, school board meetings) until the embargo has ended. This includes any summarization or accountability calculations determined by the district. Participation information includes information such as the percentage of students who participated and participation by student group. Refer to *Sharing Students' Private Information and Results Outside the School and District* later in this chapter for the requirements if embargoed results will be provided to school board members, other school officials, and charter school authorizers.



The term “embargo” means that results cannot be shared in any public forum or with other staff members who should not have access to the results until results are released publicly.

If media outlets contact the district for results during the embargo period, they should be directed to the MDE Communications division. Media outlets must enter into an embargo agreement, which allows them to receive results directly from MDE. If you receive press inquiries after results have been released to the media, you may comment on your results before the embargo is lifted; however, the media cannot publish that story until the embargo is lifted.

All districts are required to abide by the embargo constraints and timelines.

Abiding by the Embargo

As District Assessment Coordinators (DACs) work with district staff to determine how preliminary and final embargoed results will be shared, they also must provide information to all individuals with access to the results

about abiding by the embargo. A resource that can be shared with staff, *What Does It Mean to “Abide by the Embargo?”*, is included in Appendix B.

- Consider timing: Since preliminary test results for MCA and MTAS are available during the testing window, and ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS early student-level results are available in summer, discussions around use of preliminary data may be needed earlier, with additional information provided when embargoed final results are released.
- Consider audience: Teachers who have access to results must understand what the embargo means. However, there are other staff members who may not be as directly related to test administration who will also need more information. For example:
 - While some teachers may have access to results or be provided information about results, other staff may simply hear about results as parts of discussions in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) or other school committees for instructional or curriculum planning. While this is allowed, districts must remind staff in these instances that results cannot be shared or discussed with those outside of the school or district.
 - Administrators and principals likely have access to all preliminary and final embargoed results and may be the individuals who are asked questions about district and school performance by various community partners; it is important that they know what information can and cannot be provided before results are released publicly.
 - District communications staff who talk to the press, distribute information on social media, and prepare communications for the public also need to know when results and related information can be shared publicly.
- Consider what “sharing” means: Depending on how preliminary and final results are shared, DACs may need to clarify what it means to share results. In the majority of cases, sharing may be unintentional, so it is important to explicitly define what is and is not allowed during the embargo so all staff understand.
 - Discussing results in PLCs may be allowable sharing if all members have a legitimate educational interest in the results, but talking about them with teachers in other districts is not allowed.
 - Summary results cannot be shared or discussed on social media (for example, a staff member sharing how well the class performed this year) or in response to questions from the media, even in internal school-run publications or newsletters.
 - If results will be shared with school board members, they must follow all requirements outlined in this chapter, and cannot discuss the results in a public setting or answer questions from the media or other members of the public.

A security violation must be submitted through Assessment Security Records (ASR) if embargo policies are not followed.

Public Release of Final Assessment Results

Once results are released publicly, the information is available in two places on the MDE website for families, educators, and community partners to access:

- The [Minnesota Report Card](#) (MDE > Data Center > Minnesota Report Card) allows users to create graphs and tables to view results for various groups of students across the state and within districts and schools. A user guide is also available in the Using the Report Card section.
- Downloadable data files are on the [Assessment Files](#) page of the MDE website (MDE > Data Center > Data Reports and Analytics) that provide summary assessment data for the state, county, districts, and schools that can be used to perform analyses. A user guide is also available on the webpage, and information is available on the first tab of the files.

Results for the current year are also released in service provider systems once released publicly, as described earlier in this chapter under *Overview of Secure Systems and Available Reports*.

Summary data on the MDE website has privacy protection rules in place to safeguard individual student privacy while still allowing MDE to report relevant information about student groups. Further information is available on the [Student Privacy and Public Reports](#) page of the MDE website (MDE > About > Data Practices > Student Privacy and Public Reports).

Note: For districts and schools, MDE recommends that data from Secure Reports—not from public reporting—be used for analyzing school and district data because it allows the most flexibility to explore the data and summarize it in meaningful ways. Secure Reports are intended for school and district use, while other public reports have different intended primary audiences.

Individual Student Reports (ISRs)

Copies of the ISRs are provided to districts for parents/guardians. MDE includes information about the timeline for when reports are provided to districts on the [Students and Families Statewide Testing Assessment Results](#) section of the MDE website (MDE > Students and Families > Programs and Initiatives > Statewide Testing > Assessment Results); parents/guardians can ask the local district/school when and how the reports will be available to them. Note: ISRs must be provided to parents/guardians no later than Dec. 1.

For student data privacy purposes, a staff member must be available to receive the shipment of reports when they are delivered to districts and then secure them until distribution.

Federal and state legislation require that student reports be distributed to parents/guardians.

- While preliminary/early-student level results or district-created reports based on final test data can be provided to parents/guardians earlier than the receipt of the ISRs, MDE requires that districts provide the state-produced results, which have gone through rigorous quality checks, to parents/guardians.
- Each district decides if the paper copies of reports are distributed or if electronic versions are provided (such as through a secure parent/guardian portal); if provided electronically, the final version from WIDA AMS or Published Reports in PearsonAccess Next must be used.
 - If providing paper reports, consider how to issue them in a way that maintains student data privacy. Mailing results home or giving them out during fall conferences are two distribution methods that protect student data privacy.

- If providing electronic versions of reports, consider your district procedures for securely providing private student data to families. Secure submission (such as through a parent/guardian portal) is preferred over email, unless allowed by your policies.
- **INFO!** When determining how the district will provide the ISR, consider which method provides the most equitable access for parents/guardians. For example, while a majority may be able to access ISRs electronically, paper copies may need to be provided in some instances.
- MDE requires that either the paper or electronic version of the ISR be provided in order to ensure that families across the state are provided information in a consistent, uniform manner. Districts cannot only communicate portions of the information (for example, adding scores into their student information system) without also providing the ISR.
- **INFO!** If disposing of paper reports (for example, because an electronic copy was provided), ensure they are securely disposed of because they contain private student data.
- Regardless of how reports are distributed, districts should consider how to provide families with information (for example, a letter or flyer, in discussions at conferences) about how statewide assessment results are used in the context of other district and school information.
- If districts provide ISRs at fall conferences, they need to determine a plan for parents/guardians who are unable to attend (such as mailing the ISR to those families or providing them electronically) in order to meet the requirement of distributing these reports to families in a timely manner.
- If districts do not have forwarding addresses or contact information for students that have left the district, they may consider contacting the families in a different way (such as by phone or email) or working with the student’s new district. While districts are required to retain final test results for all students, they may consider keeping a copy (electronic or paper) of the ISR that could be provided to the family should they contact the school or district. Refer to *Document Retention Policy for Districts* in Appendix B for information on retaining ISRs.

If an MCA, MTAS, ACCESS, or WIDA Alternate ACCESS ISR is needed in an alternative format, such as large print, braille, or as an audio file, contact mde.testing@state.mn.us. Translated versions for MCA and MTAS may also be requested for a fee. For ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, translated versions can be downloaded from WIDA AMS to provide to parents/guardians. Translated reports provided to students’ families should accompany—not replace—the reports in English.

English Language Proficiency Accountability Assessments

Final reports for ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, including paper copies of Individual Student Reports (ISRs), rosters, and School and District Frequency Reports, are sent to the district. ISRs are provided for all students who participated and show both a proficiency level and a scale score for each attempted domain. ISRs provide a snapshot of how well the student understands and can produce the language needed to access academic content and succeed in school.

- For students who had a test code indicated for one or more domains, an NA (Not Attempted) code will be reported on the ISR for the domain(s) and all associated composite scores.

- For students who did not attempt one or more domains, a blank space will appear on the ISR for the domain(s) and all associated composite scores.

Related resources and samples are available on the [ACCESS for ELLs Scores and Reports](#) (WIDA > Assess > ACCESS for ELLs > ACCESS for ELLs Scores and Reports) and the [Alternate ACCESS Scores and Reports](#) (WIDA > Assess > Alternate ACCESS for ELLs > Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Scores & Reports) pages of the WIDA website.

NEW! As the first operational administration of the updated WIDA Alternate ACCESS will take place this year, additional details about related reports and resources for 2023–24 will be provided as they are made available from WIDA.

Standards-Based Accountability Assessments

Electronic versions of the ISRs and rosters are available in Published Reports in PearsonAccess Next. If districts decide not to receive paper copies by indicating this in Test WES, districts must instead provide the electronic ISRs from PearsonAccess Next. Note: If districts choose to receive paper copies, they will still have access to the electronic copies in PearsonAccess Next.

ISRs are provided for all students who participated. ISRs include a student’s overall results as well as performance within the subject. Descriptions of performance levels, also known as achievement levels, are also included on the ISRs to facilitate interpretation. For students who did not participate, the ISR will show why results are not included (for example, parent or student refusal test code indicated or not complete).

A number of resources for educators are available on the [Individual Student Reports \(ISRs\) Resources](#) page of the PearsonAccess Next website (PearsonAccess Next > Reporting Resources > Individual Student Reports (ISRs) Resources). Resources for students and families are available on the [Students and Families Statewide Testing Assessment Results](#) section of the MDE website (MDE > Students and Families > Programs and Initiatives > Statewide Testing > Assessment Results).

NEW! Beginning in 2023, personalized video ISRs for students with MCA or MTAS scores include an overview of the assessment and of the student’s performance in each subject taken. Video ISRs may be available with translated audio in one of the following languages if a home language has been specified in student enrollment data: Amharic, Arabic, Chinese, Hmong, Karen, Oromo, Russian, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese. ISR videos specific to the student are accessed by scanning a personal QR code on the ISR. DACs and AAs also have access to a link to each student’s video report through a downloadable file in Published Reports; these links can be provided to families. Note: These videos are intended to be a resource to support understanding of the ISR, but the ISR itself must still be provided.

Note: Student results labels are available for every student for MCA and MTAS. Districts indicate in Test WES if they want to receive these labels. These labels can be used on student permanent hard-copy files.

NEW! Beginning in 2023, these labels can also be printed from PearsonAccess Next.

Straggler Data

Following the public release of assessment results, the DSR/SSR files may be updated with straggler assessment data for ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS and MCA/MTAS. Straggler data is additional assessment data that is

included after final results are published. This typically occurs in late fall, and the loading of straggler data is communicated through the *Assessment Update*.

- For ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, this data typically comes from paper test materials that were returned after the shipping deadline or from a score appeal or transcription request.
- For MCA and MTAS, this data typically comes from late score entry requests that were processed after the deadline for results to be included in reporting.

While this data is updated in the DSR/SSR files (and therefore will appear in the Student Assessment History Report), it is not included in the Test Results Summary or accountability calculations, or typically loaded in publicly available data (such as the Minnesota Report Card) unless communicated by MDE; ISRs are not provided for these students.

Guidelines for Communicating Assessment Results

A DAC may be responsible for communicating their district's assessment results to a variety of audiences. To assist new DACs with this task, MDE has gathered the suggestions below from experienced DACs.

- The DAC should work closely with district administrators (including the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum Director, and EL Coordinator) on the plan and procedures for sharing test results with the school board, school administrators, staff, families, and the media. This plan should include:
 - Who will share the test results with each group.
 - When will the test results be shared with each group and how information on abiding by the embargo will be provided.
 - How and where will the test results be shared with each group.
 - What level of results will be shared with each group.
 - How test results fit in the overall context of the district's accountability results and other district- and school-level assessment data.
- Keep these points in mind when communicating the test results:
 - Determine the main points you want to share and keep the message simple, especially for sharing across social media and with a variety of audiences.
 - Specify the test on which you are reporting.
 - Explain the purpose of the test and any changes in the test, including changes in the standards assessed or test administration. As revised English language development and academic standards are implemented, consider your district's standards implementation plan and how assessment results may be impacted during the transition.
 - Refer to the Test Score Interpretation Resources section of the [District Resources](#) page of the MDE website for guidance documents related to using assessment results during the transition to new standards (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide

Testing > District Resources (under the Test Score Interpretation Resources expandable heading)).

- Use acronyms sparingly; spell out names as much as possible or at least the first time they are introduced.
- Create tables and graphs that the general public can understand.
- Be proactive in your reporting message. The initial story will be the first time the public hears about your results.
- Explain how the data will be used in the district and schools, and how it is used in context with other assessment and instructional data. Avoid defensive comments or making excuses for the results.
- Highlight new district programs and innovations put in place to improve student achievement.

Possible questions that media and community partners may ask include:

- What is your general reaction to the results?
- What are the highlights and lowlights of the data?
- What is the district/school doing to increase achievement?
- Why are the scores different from last year?

Appropriately Using Assessment Results

This section provides information about appropriate uses of the statewide assessment results and important considerations to keep in mind when evaluating the data.

The statewide assessments are criterion-referenced (meaning they measure performance against a fixed set of criteria, the WIDA English Language Development Standards or Minnesota Academic Standards) and summative (meaning they provide data about student performance from one point in time). At a high level, this means that statewide assessments results are designed to be used as a “systems check” at a student group, school, district, and/or state level:

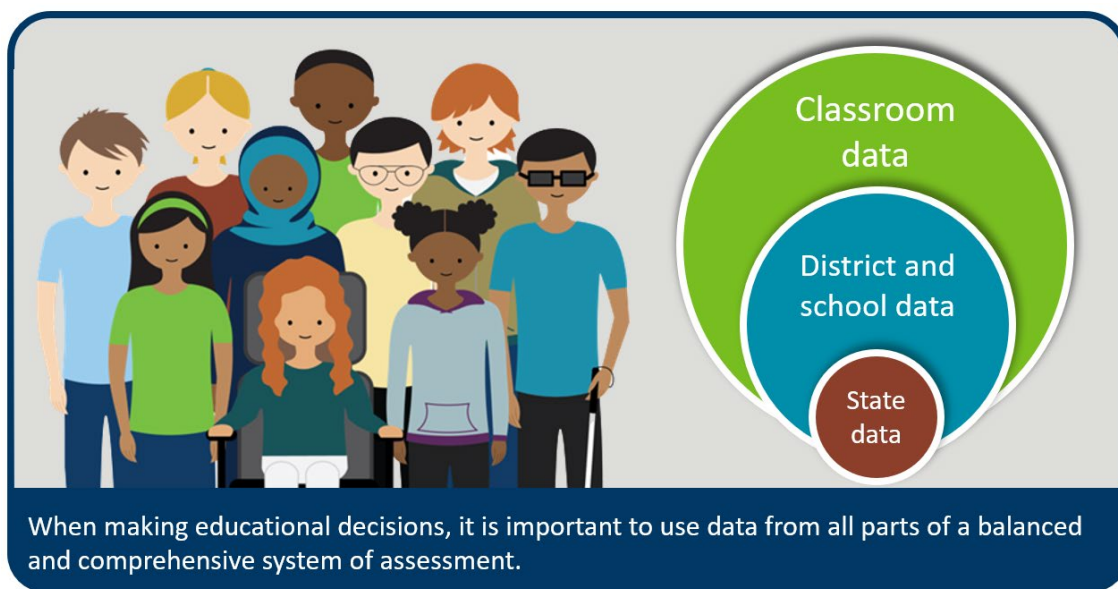
- These assessments provide one data point that should be considered in context of each district’s balanced and comprehensive assessment system. While data on statewide assessment results provides a useful starting point, the most robust evaluations of district and school performance, and the most useful findings for maintaining and improving that performance, occur when this information is paired with information from district, local, and classroom assessments.
- Districts can use summary assessment data, described in this chapter, as well as accountability data provided by MDE, to look at overall performance for a given year and over time.
- Examining changes in the following can lead to important considerations for district-, school-, and classroom-level decision-making, including evaluation of the overall alignment of course curriculum and district or classroom assessments with the standards being measured:
 - Overall achievement (MCA/MTAS) or proficiency (ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS) levels over time between student groups

- Percent of students by achievement/proficiency level within a subject or grade level
- Change in students moving between achievement/proficiency levels over time
- At an individual student level, however, the statewide assessments are not designed to provide the same fine-grained information about student learning that classroom assessments can give. Classroom assessments provide the specific information teachers need to adjust and differentiate instruction for their students.

While this section provides a high-level overview related to available results and appropriate use, the following resources provide additional information:

- Chapter 5 includes examples of ethical and unethical practices related to the use and interpretation of statewide assessment results.
- The [District Resources](#) page of the MDE website includes a section for Test Score Interpretation Resources for educators, including resources with detailed information and guidance on using statewide assessment results (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > District Resources).
- The [Testing 1, 2, 3](#) website contains a number of pages with helpful resources supporting assessment and data literacy that can be used and shared with district and school staff who interpret results from the statewide assessments.

Figure 12: Making Educational Decisions



Considerations for Comparing District and School Summary Results

It is important to keep in mind that making appropriate comparisons and inferences can be complicated when changes have occurred in the standards being assessed, test content and scoring, test participation, or test administration context. Some information is included in this section, but a history of the Minnesota statewide assessments is included in the applicable *Technical Manuals*, described under *Additional Reporting Resources* later in this chapter.

The ACCESS was first administered in 2012, and the test design for grades 1–12 ACCESS changed significantly in the 2015–16 school year. As a result, student results for grades 1–12 ACCESS should only be compared from 2017 to present. However, the test design did not change for Kindergarten ACCESS, so student results can be compared for these groups for all years of administration. Although Minnesota English learner educators are approaching full implementation of the WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework: 2020 Edition, the ACCESS test will not be aligned to the 2020 Edition until 2025–26. **NEW!** 2023–24 will be the first operational administration of the updated WIDA Alternate ACCESS aligned to the WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework: 2020 Edition. This means the test results from past years should not be compared to results from 2023–24 and forward, as the assessment is measuring different standards and has been revised. Table 40 summarizes this information.

Table 40. Comparing ACCESS for ELLs and WIDA Alternate ACCESS Assessment Results from Year to Year

| Test | Grades | First Year Administered | Year Test Design Changed | Years Scores Are Comparable |
|-----------------------|--------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ACCESS for ELLs | K | 2012 | N/A | 2012 to present |
| ACCESS for ELLs | 1–12 | 2012 | 2016 | 2017 to present |
| WIDA Alternate ACCESS | K–12 | 2013 | 2024 | 2024 and beyond |

In addition, when looking at ACCESS data over time, remember that the students with the highest language proficiency are exited from EL programming each year and are no longer part of the more recent data.

For MCA and MTAS, results should only be compared across years when the same versions of the standards were assessed. This will be especially important after the MCA-IV, the next version of the MCA, begins to be administered; the schedule for revisions to the Minnesota Academic Standards is in Appendix B, *Building a Test*. However, until the MCA-IV is administered to students (beginning first with science in school year 2024–25), the MCA will continue to assess the previous set of standards.

Table 41. Comparing MCA and MTAS Assessment Results from Year to Year

| Test | Grades | Year Standards Revised | First Year Assessed on Revised Standards | Years Scores Are Comparable |
|--------------------------|----------|------------------------|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Mathematics MCA and MTAS | 3–8 | 2007 | 2011 | 2011 to present |
| Mathematics MCA and MTAS | 11 | 2007 | 2014 | 2014 to present |
| Science MCA and MTAS | 5, 8, HS | 2009 | 2012 | 2012 to present |
| Reading MCA and MTAS | 3–8, 10 | 2010 | 2013 | 2013 to present |

However, even within the period of time where the same standards are assessed, there are other changes to keep in mind.

- When individual student graduation stakes associated with high school MCA tests changed in 2013–14, students no longer needed to achieve proficiency as a way to meet graduation assessment requirements. Consideration should be given to the extent to which performance changes are attributable to content mastery versus motivation.
- Similarly, comparing the results of the 2012 Mathematics MCA-III, with three online testing opportunities, against those from the single-opportunity administrations in 2013 or later poses a number of interpretive challenges.
- From 2011 to 2014, schools could offer the MCA-Modified in place of the MCA to persistently low-performing special education students receiving special education services. As a result, participation on the MCA by students receiving special education services may have declined in some districts and schools. Starting in 2015, the MCA-Modified was no longer offered, and thus student participation in the MCA and/or MTAS may have increased.
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there are important considerations for using data from both 2020 and 2021.
 - There was limited data for 2020 and no summary data was provided for any public or secure reports. Refer to [Statewide Assessment Reporting Guidance Due to COVID-19](#) for more information on using the 2020 results appropriately, considerations for summarization within the district or schools, and information on maintaining student data privacy.
 - In addition, there are important considerations for using available data from 2021, given the continued COVID-19 pandemic and other extenuating circumstances. Refer to [2021 Statewide Assessment Reporting Guidance](#) for guidance on using the 2021 results appropriately and in context.
 - Both guidance documents have been archived on the [MDE website](#) for future reference (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > District Resources > Archive).

More generally, schools and districts should also keep in mind that direct comparisons of assessment results between districts, or even between schools within a district, can be complicated by the fact that districts and schools often differ along multiple dimensions beyond curriculum and instruction, which may logically impact performance. These may include (but are not limited to) resources, local priorities, and student populations. As such, comparisons of assessment results between schools and districts should be made selectively, intentionally, and with caution.

Using Scale Scores

Scale scores are created by translating student results (based on a raw score for fixed-form tests, or a pattern of responses for adaptive tests) onto a standardized scale.

- For English language proficiency accountability assessments (ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS), scale scores within each domain or composite area are on a vertical scale and do have meaning across grade levels, so each composite scale score or each domain scale score can be compared from year to year.

However, the scale scores for each composite and each domain are independent, and comparisons across composites and domains cannot be made with scale scores.

- For standards-based accountability assessments (MCA/MTAS), the grade-level scales are independent. This means that the scale scores cannot be compared across grades, since the tests assess the specific content for that grade level. Scale scores can be used to look at performance over time within a grade (for example, comparing performance of grade 4 students over time) but not across grades (for example, comparing grade 4 students to grade 5 students). Achievement levels, however, may be used for comparison across grades from year to year.

Using Proficiency Levels (ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS)

For ACCESS, students are assigned a proficiency level based on their scale score.

- For ACCESS, there are six English language proficiency levels: 1—Entering, 2—Emerging, 3—Developing, 4—Expanding, 5—Bridging, and 6—Reaching. Proficiency level scores are presented as whole numbers followed by a decimal. The whole number indicates the student’s language proficiency level based on the WIDA ELD Standards. The number following the decimal indicates the proportion within the proficiency level range that the student’s scale score represents, rounded to the nearest tenth.
- The interpretation of scale scores to proficiency level scores is grade specific, not grade-level cluster specific. For example, a Reading scale score of 355 for a fifth-grade student is interpreted as Level 4.0. The same scale score for a fourth grader results in Level 4.6, and for a third-grade student that scale score results in Level 5.2.
- Each domain reports a separate score; therefore, the same scale scores in Listening and Reading do not become the same proficiency level scores. For example, consider a sixth-grade student in grade-level cluster 6–8. This student has a scale score of 370 for Listening, which is a proficiency level score of 4.3. For Reading, the student also has a scale score of 370; however, this is a proficiency level score of 3.8.

NEW! For WIDA Alternate ACCESS, proficiency level scores will describe a student’s performance in terms of the five WIDA Alternate English Language Proficiency Levels: 1—Entering, 2—Emerging, 3—Developing, 4—Expanding, and 5—Bridging.

- WIDA Alternate ACCESS proficiency level scores are unique from other ACCESS assessments.
- A student who scores a PL 1 on WIDA Alternate ACCESS is not necessarily performing at the same level as a student who scores at the Entering proficiency level on ACCESS Online or Paper.

For ACCESS, the following resources can be used to assist families, teachers, and administrators with moving from scores to practical recommendations for the services and instructional support of students. All of these resources are available in the [Resource Library](#) of the WIDA website (WIDA > Resource Library). Note: Additional details about available resources for WIDA Alternate ACCESS will be provided as they are available.

- Performance Definitions: This resource outlines what a student can do at each proficiency level in each domain.

- **Can Do Descriptors:** This resource highlights what language learners can do at various stages of language development across different content areas.
- **Model Performance Indicators:** This resource identifies and describes the language abilities a student already has, the skills a student can work on, and the instructional supports that might be effective as a student develops new language abilities.

Educators can use the data to create personal learning profiles based on ACCESS scores, the Can Do descriptors, and classroom information. Knowledge of student proficiency levels across the four language domains can be used to offer instructional supports that enhance access to content and advance language use and development. Ongoing ACCESS data can help inform the creation and use of appropriate formative language assessments in the classroom. Additionally, the data can be used to support EL and content educator planning and collaboration. Working together, these educators can provide English learners with opportunities throughout the school day to develop English language skills in all content areas.

Using Achievement Levels and Achievement Level Descriptors (MCA/MTAS)

Since the MCA and MTAS measure student learning of the Minnesota Academic Standards, the assessment results are communicated by categorizing student performance into four achievement levels:

- **MCA:** Exceeds, Meets, Partially Meets, and Does Not Meet the expectations of the grade-level standards
- **MTAS:** Exceeds, Meets, Partially Meets, and Does Not Meet the alternate achievement standards

Students are assigned an achievement level based on their scale score. The achievement levels can be used to look across grade levels to gain a general sense of progress in a subject over time. Since the standards become more complex as grade levels increase, students who move up in achievement level from one grade to the next may be demonstrating progress. However, it is difficult to make similar claims for students who remain in the same achievement level without comparing to additional evidence of academic progress in a subject. Although the academic standards are aligned across grade levels, the content on the MCA/MTAS is grade-specific. It is difficult to make claims about whether students have retained knowledge from previous grades and are improving based on statewide assessments scores alone. **NEW!** Refer to [Understanding Student Progress on the MCA](#) for more information about using MCA data to look at student progress (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > District Resources (under the Test Score Interpretation Resources expandable heading)).



Keep in mind that academic standards change from grade to grade, and it is difficult to determine whether students are progressing based on MCA or MTAS results alone.

The Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs) and Benchmark ALDs available on the [Success Criteria](#) page of the Testing 1, 2, 3 website explain the general knowledge, skills, and abilities from the grade-level standards demonstrated by students across each level of achievement on the MCA and MTAS (Testing 1, 2, 3 > Plan and Teach > Success Criteria).

- ALDs at the strand/substrand level are available for all grades and subjects of the MCA and MTAS. These ALDs provide a broad description of the knowledge and skills students typically demonstrate at each of the four achievement levels. The ALDs, and supplementary ALD Maps for MCA, can also be used by educators in instructional planning and to evaluate the rigor of their curriculum and classroom assessments. Additionally, they can be useful to improve vertical alignment of knowledge and skills across grade levels.
- Benchmark ALDs are available for Reading and Mathematics MCAs. These provide more detailed descriptions of the knowledge and skills students typically demonstrate for each benchmark and clarify the expected learning outcomes for instruction and classroom assessment aligned to the Minnesota Academic Standards in both subject areas. They can be used to support educators' analysis of the depth of their curriculum, instruction, and classroom assessments and be used along with the benchmark reports.

INFO! Refer to the [Plan and Teach](#) section of the Testing 1, 2, 3 website for additional resources to support grade-level instructional planning aligned to the academic standards.

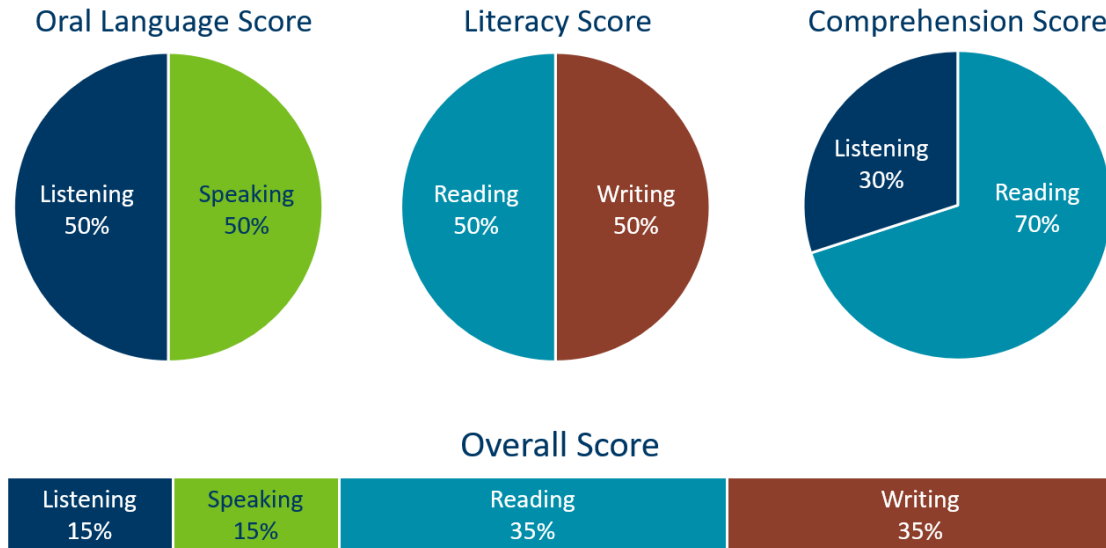
Using Composite Scores (ACCESS)

In addition to proficiency level and scale scores for each domain of ACCESS, students receive a proficiency level score and a scale score for different combinations of the language domains. These composite scores are Oral Language, Literacy, Comprehension, and Overall. This data is available in the DSR/SSR files and Test Results Summary reports.

Only students who complete all four domains receive all four composite scores. If a student does not complete a particular domain, scores for that domain and any associated composite scores will be missing from the student's results.

The following graphic illustrates how the composite scores are determined. The Oral Language and Literacy composites equally weight Listening and Speaking scale scores at 50% each. The Comprehension composite weights Reading scale scores at 70% and Listening scale scores at 30%. The Overall composite weights Reading and Writing scale scores each at 35% and Listening and Speaking scale scores each at 15%. As with proficiency levels for individual language domains, the interpretation of scale scores to proficiency levels is grade specific, not grade-level cluster specific.

Figure 13: ACCESS Composite Scores



Composite scores demand careful consideration. An Overall proficiency level, for example, can helpfully summarize student performance. However, students with identical Overall proficiency levels might have very different profiles in terms of their oral language and literacy development (for example, one student might have very strong speaking skills, while another might excel at reading). Because a high score in one domain can inflate a composite score, a student’s individual performance in each domain is more informative than a single composite score.

Using Subscores (MCA)

Strand and substrand (or subscore) data for MCA is provided in DSR/SSR files, Test Results Summary reports, Benchmark Reports, the Assessment Files, and the Subscore Report. The Subscore Report is available on the [Subscore Report](#) page of the PearsonAccess Next website (PearsonAccess Next > Reporting Resources > Subscore Report). The report provides the public with access to school-, district-, and state-level MCA subscore data for a selected test, year, grade, and subject. There is a user guide available on the [Additional Reporting Resources](#) page of the PearsonAccess Next website (PearsonAccess Next > Reporting Resources > Additional Reporting Resources).

When considering data at the strand or substrand level for an individual student, the error of measurement increases because the number of possible items at the strand or substrand level is small. Using these scores at the student level is not an effective use of the data; local district and classroom assessment information is much better suited for student-level discussions of learning or understanding. **INFO!** It is not a one-to-one relationship between the MCA strand scale score (1–9) and the MCA strand performance levels (Below, At/Near, or Above Expectations). This means that a specific strand scale score may not always align to the same strand performance level because there is measurement error in student score estimates. The individual student strand score and conditional standard error of measurement are used to calculate the strand performance level.

Additionally, looking at the percent of students at the three different strand performance levels (Below Expectations, At or Near Expectations, and Above Expectations) at the district or school level in the Benchmark

Reports and Subscore Reports may be a more appropriate way to evaluate performance each year and over time than looking at the scale scores for strand and substrand data available in some reports (such as DSR/SSR, Test Results Summary, and the Assessment Files). The strand performance level is determined by comparing the school (or district) performance to the state expectation at the “Meets” achievement level. Keep in mind that subscore data is based on a limited number of items, so examine this data along with local district and classroom data to determine the extent to which the same trends are noticeable when making decisions about curriculum and instruction.

Using Benchmark Reports (MCA)

MCA Benchmark Reports are available in PearsonAccess Next annually in September, and are produced for each grade level for the Reading, Mathematics, and Science MCAs. These reports measure and provide school- and district-level performance on each benchmark assessed from the Minnesota Academic Standards for the current year.

The benchmark reports are designed to be an additional resource that educators can use to identify benchmarks from the Minnesota Academic Standards within a grade and subject for which a school or district shows performance less than, similar to, and/or greater than the “Meets” achievement level—in other words, how students performed on each benchmark assessed compared to the “Meets” achievement level expected for each grade.

It is important to interpret the benchmark reports with caution because this data has been aggregated at the benchmark level within the school and/or district, and some benchmarks are assessed more or less frequently than others according to the test specifications. Staff may find it helpful to have conversations about this data and compare how students have performed on classroom assessments measuring learning of similar benchmarks, or where and how a specific benchmark is taught in a course’s scope and sequence.

Resources to support districts in the appropriate use and understanding of the benchmark report are available on the [Additional Reporting Resources](#) page of the PearsonAccess Next website (PearsonAccess Next > Reporting Resources > Additional Reporting Resources). Note: In 2019, the benchmark reports were redesigned using a different calculation method to measure school and district performance on benchmarks. Staff should not compare benchmark reports before 2019 to benchmark reports from 2019 and after. In addition, no benchmark reports were produced for 2020.

Using Individual Student Results

Individual student results show a broad overview of student learning of grade-level standards, and they are intended to be interpreted alongside more fine-grained information about the individual student from the classroom teacher. However, federal and state legislation requires that individual student results must be reported for all statewide assessments. It is therefore important that parents/guardians are given information and guidance on the appropriate use of these results.

- While individual student results may be of some use, districts and families should consider the limitations of analyzing individual results as they only provide information from one point in time. When making educational decisions about individual students, a comprehensive approach should be taken,

and other classroom-level assessment and instructional data should be used in conjunction with statewide assessment data.

- The English language proficiency accountability assessments are also summative assessments, but the results are designed to measure an individual student’s progress towards English language proficiency. These results can be used at the individual level as well as to evaluate EL programs at a school or district level.

When using individual student results, refer to your district’s data privacy policies and procedures for sharing the data with other district and school staff. Even if the data are summarized, the results presented may be only for a small number of students, making it possible to identify individual students. Ensure student data privacy is maintained when accessing or sharing data electronically, or when sharing printed paper copies of any reports or results. Refer to *Use of Student Information and Results* later in this chapter for additional information.

When you share statewide results with families, make sure you give them additional information so they have enough context about what those results mean.

And remember, while it is inappropriate to make individual student decisions based on MCA/MTAS results, it *is appropriate* to make individual student decisions with ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS results.



Career and College Readiness Scores

Student career and college readiness (CCR) scores for grades 10 and 11 are provided for Reading and Mathematics MCAs on ISRs and in DSR/SSR files. These scores, required by Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.30, are measures of students’ career and college readiness. Note: There are no CCR scores reported for science.

Goal scores have been established for student CCR scores to determine whether students are on track to pass a college entrance exam by the end of grade 11.

- Students who are at or above the CCR goal score are expected to be on track to demonstrate college and career readiness in that subject on a college admissions test at the end of grade 11, and to be able to successfully complete coursework in that respective subject without remediation.
- Student scores below the CCR goal score may indicate that the student’s performance is not on track to meet career and college readiness.

Additional information about CCR scores, including the goal progress scores, is available in the *District and School Student Results (DSR/SSR) User Guide* available on the [Assessment Secure Reports](#) page of the MDE website (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Business and Finance > Data Submissions > Assessment Secure Reports).

Placement Scores and PSEO

Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.30 enables college students to be placed into college-level courses at Minnesota State colleges and universities based on their high school MCA scale scores. This means that students who have a score at or above a designated score on the grade 10 Reading MCA and/or grade 11 Mathematics MCA are not required to take a developmental level course in the respective subject area. For more information and scores for course placement, call Minnesota State at 800-456-8519 or go to the [Minnesota State Academic Readiness](#) page of the Minnesota State College and Universities website (minnstate.edu > System Office Divisions > Academic and Student Affairs > Academic Affairs > Academic Readiness > how MCAs are used).

In addition, results for the grade 8 Reading MCA are also used to determine eligibility for students who wish to enroll in Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) in grade 10. Refer to the [PSEO for 10th Graders \(CTE Pathway\)](#) page of the MDE website for more information (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Career and College Success > Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) > PSEO for 10th Graders (CTE Pathway)).

Districts may share individual student results with educational institutions for these purposes before final results are released publicly because they are being shared for an instructional purpose. Refer to the *Embargoed Final Assessment Results* section earlier in this chapter for more information.

Accountability Measures

While Minnesota's assessment and accountability systems are interrelated, the purposes for each are different. The accountability system uses data generated by assessments for three of its indicators, but also includes other indicators, such as graduation rates and attendance. Both the assessment and accountability system report data to keep the public informed on how schools, districts, and the state are doing.

The North Star accountability system under ESSA uses assessment results in the following indicators: Academic Achievement (one each for reading and mathematics), Academic Progress (one each for reading and mathematics), and Progress Toward English Language Proficiency. Note: There were no assessment-based accountability calculations for 2020 or 2021. More information on these indicators and how they are used in accountability is available on the [Accountability Indicators](#) page of the MDE website (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > School Achievement > School and District Accountability > Accountability Indicators). Email mde.essa@state.mn.us for any questions on accountability measures.

Keep in mind when looking at final assessment and accountability results that students may be included differently. For example, final assessment results include all students tested in the school and district whereas accountability results use different criteria to determine which student results are included (such as enrolled half an academic year). For more information on how students are included in accountability, refer to the Business Rules posted on the [Accountability Indicators](#) page of the MDE website (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > School Achievement > School and District Accountability > Accountability Indicators).

Additional Reporting Resources

Technical Reports

This section provides additional information on the assessment technical reports provided by MDE. Technical reports provide background and technical information about the construction, scoring, and psychometric characteristics of the statewide assessments.

The [Technical Reports](#) page of the MDE website (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > Technical Reports) includes the following reports:

- **Achievement Level Cut Scores:** A document that provides the minimum scale scores required for each achievement level on the Reading, Mathematics, and Science MCAs and MTAS.
- **Alignment Reviews:** Information about studies conducted to evaluate the alignment of the grade-level assessments and the Minnesota Academic Standards.
- **Raw-to-Scale-Score Tables:** Documents that provide the correspondence between raw score (number of questions correct) and scale score for a specific test subject and grade. They are provided for the Science MCA and all subjects of the MTAS; raw-to-scale score conversion approaches are feasible only when all students take the same items that count towards their score. Reading and Mathematics MCAs do not have raw-to-scale score tables as students take an adaptive assessment.
- **Standard Setting Technical Reports:** Reports on the process used to set the achievement levels for assessments that categorize student performance. This section also includes the English language proficiency definition report, which provides the process used to define proficiency for ACCESS.
- **Technical Manuals and Yearbooks:** *Technical Manuals* provide detailed information on the construction, scoring, reporting, and psychometric characteristics for assessments. The corresponding *Yearbooks* provide statistics on the measurement properties and score distributions of the assessments for administrations during an academic year.

For ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, the following assessment technical reports are available:

- **Scale Score to Proficiency Level tables:** These tables—one for ACCESS and one for WIDA Alternate ACCESS—provide the scale scores that correspond to the proficiency levels for each grade and domain or composite area; the scale score cuts for the proficiency levels remain the same from year to year. The tables are available in the [WIDA Secure Portal](#) (log in to the .WIDA Secure Portal required).
- **Annual Technical Reports for ACCESS for ELLs:** These technical reports provide detailed information on the construction, scoring, reporting, and psychometric characteristics of the ACCESS for both online and paper test forms. Refer to the [Technical Reports](#) page of the MDE website (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > Technical Reports) for the link to the reports and where to find other Minnesota-specific information for ACCESS results.
- **Annual Technical Report for Alternate ACCESS for ELLs:** This technical report provides detailed information on the construction, scoring, reporting, and psychometric characteristics of the Alternate ACCESS. Refer to the [Technical Reports](#) page of the MDE website (MDE > Districts, Schools and

Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > Technical Reports) for the link to the reports and where to find other Minnesota-specific information for Alternate ACCESS results.

NEW! 2023–24 will be the first operational administration of the updated WIDA Alternate ACCESS, and additional details about updated technical reports and resources will be provided as they are available.

Lexile and Quantile Measures

Reading MCA On-Demand Reports and ISRs include student Lexile scores. The Lexile Framework, developed by MetaMetrics® Inc., measures a student’s reading ability and provides the reading level of various texts. Parents/guardians and teachers can use Lexiles to determine whether a text with a known Lexile level is too easy, too difficult, or at the right level for a student. When reading a book within the predicted Lexile range, the reader should comprehend enough of the text to make sense of it, while still being challenged enough to maintain interest and learn from it. Students who read text at the right level are more likely to improve their reading skills.

Mathematics MCA On-Demand Reports and ISRs include student Quantile scores. The Quantiles Framework, developed by MetaMetrics® Inc., describes a student’s ability to solve mathematical problems and the demand of mathematical skills and concepts. Quantile measures provide insight into a student’s readiness to learn more advanced mathematical skills and concepts; using mathematics materials within the predicted Quantile range can challenge students without overwhelming them.

View additional information and find links to other resources on the [Lexile and Quantile Measures](#) page of the MDE website (MDE > District, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > Minnesota Tests > Lexile and Quantile Measures).

Public and Parental/Guardian Review of Statewide Assessments Policy

MDE provides public and parental/guardian access to tests as outlined in *Policy for Public and Parental/Guardian Review of Statewide Assessments* in Appendix B. All requests to review test materials must be made in writing, and this review can only be done at MDE at a mutually agreeable time. **NEW!** In order to ensure student data privacy, this policy has been updated to have the parent/guardian request the review through the district where the student is currently enrolled. If contacted by a parent/guardian, the DAC confirms that the requesting individual(s) should have access to the student’s information, and provides the student MARSS/SSID number, test/subject, and parent/guardian name(s) and contact information securely to MDE by uploading a document through File Exchange in Test WES. MDE will then work directly with the parent/guardian for scheduling. The deadline for parents/guardians to make a request has also been updated from Jan. 1 to March 1 in order to provide more time to submit a request based on the receipt of the ISR.

Use of Student Information and Results

This section includes detailed information about data practices and the use of student information, including results.

Sharing Student Information in the School and District

Two laws govern how schools and districts must use and manage student information: the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (MGDPA).

FERPA (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 C.F.R Part 99) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all districts and schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

- Review [FERPA language on the U.S. Department of Education website](#).
- Review [FERPA language on the Electronic Code of Federal Regulations](#) page of the U.S. Government Printing Office website.

MGDPA, Chapter 13 of the Minnesota Statutes, also governs student information and establishes general requirements for data practices in schools. It applies to all public schools, including charter schools.

- Review [MDGPA language](#) on the Minnesota Revisor’s website.
- Review [MGDPA language governing educational data](#) on the Minnesota Revisor’s website.

Each district determines their data privacy policies and procedures, and how data will be shared within the district. These policies and procedures should be reviewed and shared with staff annually. In addition, districts are annually required to provide notification to parents/guardians about FERPA rights.

Much of the information in the applicable systems used for test administration, student assessment results, and data files, such as test scores and eligibility for a free or reduced-price meal, is classified as private data under both FERPA and the MGDPA. If the information is directly related to an individual student, then it is classified as private educational data and cannot be shared, even within the school community, unless either the district and school have parental/guardian consent to do so, or an exception in state or federal law allows the data to be shared with the intended recipient. The responsibility to keep this information private applies to all individuals who have access to it, including teachers, teacher aides, and other education professionals working in the school and district.

One exception in FERPA does allow the school and district to share private data from a student’s record with school officials who have a legitimate educational interest in knowing the information. Each school and district make its own determination as to whether teachers have a legitimate educational interest in a specific piece of information from a student’s record (such as eligibility for a free or reduced-price meal). Thus, schools and districts should proactively make this determination **before** giving access to specific information about individual students to teachers and other school personnel. The MGDPA also requires that individuals should not have access to an individual student’s private data unless they have a work assignment that requires access to the information. Therefore, information from a student’s assessment reports and data files, including eligibility for a free or reduced-price meal, should be shared only with individuals who are directly involved in administering and enforcing an educational program, and who have a specific, legitimate educational interest in knowing the information.

If a school plans to share information about all students with all teachers in the school, then it must be able to justify that all of the teachers have a legitimate educational interest in knowing the information about individual

students, such as to coordinate services and training, or to help students improve educational outcomes. Schools should consider, however, whether this method of sharing is most useful to the students (as opposed to being convenient for staff). From a best practice perspective, schools should share student data in a way that serves the needs of the students while also protecting their rights and privacy. MDE does not recommend that schools share all student test reports and data files with all teachers.

Sharing Students' Private Information and Results Outside the School and District

School Board Members and Other School Officials

Schools and districts may only share student information (such as test scores and other information about the student in test data files) with the parent/guardian's consent, or if a state or federal law allows the data to be shared with the intended recipient.

Schools and districts may choose to share educational data within the educational agency with school officials, including with the school board and contractors hired by the district. Like all FERPA exceptions, allowing schools to share educational data within the educational agency is permissible, but not required. If a school chooses to share data with the school board or contractors, it should do so selectively and only when it has determined that the school board or contractors have a legitimate educational interest in the information.

Note that contractors hired by the district are included in the definition of "school officials" if they meet all of the following:

- The contractors perform an institutional service or function for which the agency or institution would otherwise use employees;
- The contractors are under the direct control of the agency or institution with respect to the use and maintenance of education records; and
- The contractors are bound by FERPA requirements not to redisclose personally identifiable information from an education record to any other party without the prior consent of the parent/guardian or eligible student, and will use it only for the purposes for which the disclosure was made.

The school's annual notification of FERPA rights includes contractors or consultants as school officials with a legitimate educational interest in education records. Typically, this means putting in place a contract or other written agreement with the outside entity that establishes expectations about data practices.

Preliminary results and embargoed final assessment and accountability results are included in the data schools and districts may share with their school board members and other school officials. Refer to *Sharing Preliminary and Embargoed Assessment Results with School Officials* later in this chapter for the policy on sharing this data.

Charter School Authorizers

Charter schools may also wish to report some information to their charter school authorizers to show how students are performing on statewide tests.

- If a charter school does not want to share student-level data with the charter authorizer, it can share summary data that reports testing information about groups of students in a way that does not potentially identify any individual students.
- If a charter school is considering sharing private student-level data with their authorizer, a FERPA exception allows schools to do so with an authorized representative for purposes of evaluating or auditing an educational program or for purposes of ensuring compliance with federal education program requirements.
- To share student data with its authorizer under this exception, a charter school must determine that the purpose is compliant with FERPA. The charter school must designate the authorizer as an authorized representative, and it must enter into a data sharing agreement with the authorizer.

As a best practice, MDE recommends that charter schools limit the amount of private information shared to only what is necessary, and that schools consider removing personally identifying student information, even if they enter into an authorized representative data sharing agreement. The school should work with its legal counsel or other qualified person to ensure that the data sharing agreement satisfies FERPA requirements.

Preliminary assessment results and embargoed final assessment and accountability results are included in the data charter schools may share with their authorizers. If only summary-level information is provided, a data sharing agreement is not required, but a nondisclosure agreement for these results is required; refer to the next section for additional information. If student-level data will be shared and a data sharing agreement is in place, it must include nondisclosure provisions about preliminary and embargoed final results, if they will be shared.

Sharing Preliminary and Embargoed Assessment Results with School Officials

This section outlines the policy on sharing preliminary and embargoed data with school officials, including school board members and contractors hired by the district. (Charter schools can share results with charter school authorizers under a FERPA exception, as defined in the previous section. Requirements in this section must also be followed for authorizers if a data sharing agreement is not in place, or if it does not address preliminary or embargoed final results.)

Schools should limit the number of individuals who have access to assessment results; only those school officials who have a legitimate educational interest in the assessment results should have access to preliminary assessment results or embargoed final assessment and accountability results in any form. School districts must collect and retain nondisclosure agreements for all school officials who have access to these results. These agreements must then be kept on file for two years after the end of the academic school year in which testing took place. Such nondisclosure agreements are developed by districts and include confirmation that the individual will not share preliminary or embargoed assessment results prior to public release. A sample nondisclosure that may be used by districts for school officials is available in Appendix A.



If sharing embargoed results with school officials, collect and retain non-disclosure agreements to confirm officials understand the requirements for using results during the embargo.

If preliminary or embargoed results will be shared, they cannot be discussed in public forums (for example, social media), posted online, or reflected in public meeting minutes until the embargo has ended. Refer to *Embargoed Final Assessment Results* earlier in this chapter for more information. Note: Individual student-level results should not be shared publicly at any point, as required under FERPA regulations. Student-level results should only be shared with school officials with a legitimate educational interest, or others who are permitted by the MGDPA or FERPA to access private educational data, as described previously.

Even with aggregate data, if results involve a small number of students, or if all or most of the students fall into a category that would reveal information about all of the students (such as achievement level), it may be possible to identify individual students based on demographic information and other factors. **INFO!** Districts should be advised that recent changes to Minnesota Statutes Chapter 13, made during the 2023 legislative session, now restrict what schools and districts can and cannot designate as directory information. Districts also should consult with their internal guidance, legal counsel, or data practices compliance official about how to protect private data in aggregate data. MDE's current privacy protection rules prohibit publicly reporting assessment results if there are fewer than 10 students represented in the data. If the school or district decides to summarize the data, be sure to consider student privacy protection at all levels of results (for example, completed assessments by grade, achievement levels).

Note: The requirement for a nondisclosure agreement for sharing results described in this section is specific to school officials who are not district and school employees, such as board members, contractors, or consultants. Districts should follow their data privacy policies and procedures for district and school staff who have access to preliminary or final embargoed results.

MDE Data Sharing

FERPA and the MGDPA place similar restrictions on MDE data sharing. FERPA regulations authorize MDE to redisclose private information about individual students without consent only in limited situations:

- If the redisclosure is to an organization conducting studies for, or on behalf of, educational agencies or institutions for the purpose of improving instruction, or
- If the redisclosure is to authorized representatives for evaluation or audit of a state or federally funded education program.

In order for SIS and Data Warehouse vendors to receive extracts of preliminary results data for the MCA and MTAS during the testing window from Pearson, and final data from MDE on behalf of their member districts, a data sharing agreement between the district and vendor must be on file with MDE. A separate data sharing agreement is required if a district has different vendors for preliminary and final data.

Any entity (such as a law firm or research organization) or individual outside of a school district that wishes to request assessment data must complete a data request. Review the [Data Practices](#) section of the MDE website for more information (MDE > About MDE > Data Practices).

If MDE shares individual-level student data with outside researchers or authorized representatives, it must enter a data sharing agreement before any data is shared. The agreement must identify the entity that will receive the data, the purpose for which the data will be used, the scope of data that will be shared, and how the entity will protect the privacy and security of the data. When sharing private student information from assessment data

files with researchers or authorized representatives, MDE takes additional steps to protect data privacy. For example, all requests are reviewed by the MDE Data Sharing Review Team, and generally MDE does not share student identifiers such as name, MARSS/SSID number, or date of birth with researchers. MDE requests that districts and schools take similar steps to comply with FERPA and protect student privacy when sharing data with researchers.

Secure Methods for Sharing Student Information

MDE recommends that schools and districts avoid using email to share student test results with staff members. If email is used to share data, MDE requests that a secure email method be used to ensure the content of the email cannot be viewed by someone other than the intended recipient. Complete student demographic information (such as a combination of student name, date of birth, and MARSS/SSID number) should **not** be emailed outside the district or school network for any reason. This includes screenshots or attachments where student information is included.

In addition, send only a student's MARSS/SSID number to MDE when requesting help on student records. Do not send other demographic data elements (such as a combination of student name, date of birth, and MARSS/SSID number) electronically. This includes screenshots of MDE systems or attachments where student information is shown. Districts should use the File Exchange in Test WES to upload a file if secure information needs to be provided to MDE.



Remember, when emailing MDE about a student, **ONLY** include the student's MARSS/SSID number.

Providing Assessment Results When Students Move or Are Not Enrolled

When a student moves between schools or districts, the school/district where the student tested is authorized under a FERPA exception to release test results to the receiving school or district. Minnesota law also requires that, when a student transfers, the public school must transmit the student's educational records to the new school in which the student enrolls. Parents/guardians requesting test scores will need to contact the school district where their child was tested to receive the scores.

MDE expects districts and schools to provide statewide assessment results (and districts may also include any local assessment results, if they choose) to the receiving school or district when a student moves. If the sending school or district does not provide the test results, the receiving school or district may use the Student Assessment History Report to look up the statewide assessment history for any student enrolled in their district.

To obtain assessment history for students who are no longer enrolled, the district should first contact the district where the student was previously enrolled. If the DAC in the previous district cannot locate the requested test

scores, or does not respond, the DAC in the new district must complete a data request. Review the [Data Practices](#) section for more information (MDE > About MDE > Data Practices).

Note: Since students enrolled in nonpublic schools are not submitted in student enrollment data to MDE, nonpublic schools cannot look up assessment history through the Student Assessment History Report.

Appendix A — Forms



Test Administration Report

District Name: _____ School Name: _____ Date: _____

Form Completed By: _____ Signature: _____ Test and Subject: _____

The *Test Administration Report* (TAR) is used to record a variety of situations, including, but not limited to, test misadministrations, special circumstances (such as documentation of some accommodations and supports), and reasons for invalidations. Refer to Chapter 5 of the *Procedures Manual* for additional information about circumstances and incidents to document on this form.

Provide the student information and description of the circumstance or incident below. If an adult was involved (for example, translator), include the adult’s name, signature, and role in test administration in the description. Attach additional sheets to this form as needed.

Districts are not required to return the TAR to MDE or service providers, unless requested. However, districts must maintain records for two years after the end of the academic school year in which testing took place for audits or monitoring conducted by MDE, or to answer questions when reports are received. If completed by the School Assessment Coordinator, a copy of the report should be forwarded to the District Assessment Coordinator.

| Name of Student | Gr. | MARSS/SSID (13 digits) | Description |
|-----------------|-----|---------------------------|-------------|
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| Name of Student | Gr. | MARSS/SSID (13 digits) | Description |
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Test Materials Assigned to Students Checklist

(FOR DISTRICT AND SCHOOL USE ONLY—Do Not Return to MDE or Service Provider.)

Test(s): _____

Test Monitor: _____

School Name: _____ Grade: _____

Use this form to assign secure test materials to students; secure materials that may be used for multiple students (such as a mathematics or science script) may also be included. All secure test materials distributed must be collected before students leave the testing room. Return ALL used and unused secure test materials to your District or School Assessment Coordinator as soon as possible after the completion of testing.

| Test | Type of Material | Security Barcode | Student Name (if applicable) | Date Returned | Notes |
|------|------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|-------|
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| Test | Type of Material | Security Barcode | Student Name (if applicable) | Date Returned | Notes |
|------|------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|-------|
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Report any missing secure test materials and the circumstances surrounding missing items to the District or School Assessment Coordinator immediately.

I certify that I have accounted for all secure materials and have thoroughly documented any missing materials. I understand that if there is any discrepancy, this form may be used as a reference for investigation.

Test Monitor/Test Administrator (Signature) *Date*

Assessment Coordinator (Signature) *Date*

Request for Late Score Entry Form

Pearson Minnesota Program Team Fax: 319-358-4299

Use this form to request late score entry if student responses in MCA paper test materials or MTAS data were not entered during the testing windows. One form must be completed for each student.

There is a **\$200 fee** for late score entry for up to 10 students after the close of the applicable testing window. A purchase order (PO) made payable to Pearson can be included with the completed form(s). The purchase order should have an address on where an invoice can be sent to.

For MCA paper test materials:

- If the test materials **have not** yet been returned to Pearson, fax this completed form to Pearson at 319-358-4299. Ship the used test materials to Pearson at the following address: Pearson, Attn: Minnesota Program Team; 7405 Irish Dr SW. Cedar Rapids, IA 52401. Note: Pearson does not supply return labels for this shipment. Once secure materials are received by Pearson, they will be removed from the missing materials list.
- If test materials **have** been returned to Pearson, fax this completed form to Pearson. Indicate when test materials were shipped and ensure the test book security number(s) are provided below. Submit these requests as soon as possible so that test materials can be located in a timely manner.

For MTAS:

- Fax this completed form to Pearson at 319-358-4299. Include the MTAS Data Collection Form and the Learner Characteristic Inventory (LCI) data (if not already entered).
- If the data were returned with the Task Administration Manual, ensure the security number is provided below, and submit the request as soon as possible so that test materials can be located in a timely manner.

Note: If you do not have access to a fax machine, refer to [Alternate to Fax Form Submissions](#) for instructions on submitting the information through PearsonAccess Next (PearsonAccess Next > Support).

DISTRICT/SCHOOL INFORMATION

District and School Name: _____
 District #: _____ School #: _____ Phone #: _____
 District Assessment Coordinator: _____ PO #: _____

STUDENT INFORMATION

Name (last, first, MI): _____
 Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy): _____ Gender: _____ Grade: _____
 MARSS/SSID (13 digits): _____ Date Tested: _____

LATE SCORE ENTRY AND TEST MATERIAL INFORMATION

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Test: | Subject: | Test Material Security Number: | How Returned: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MCA | <input type="checkbox"/> Reading | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Shipped separately from other secure test materials |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MTAS | <input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Returned with Secure Materials |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ | |

Shipment Tracking Number: _____ Date Shipped: _____

District Assessment Coordinator (DAC) Signature

Date

The following form is a sample that districts may provide to medical professionals to document information related to the Medical Excuse (ME) test code.

Sample Medical Excuse Documentation Form

There are times when a student cannot participate in instruction or assessments due to a significant medical or mental health emergency. For statewide assessment purposes, a medical emergency differs from an ongoing medical condition as follows:

- A *medical emergency* is defined as a short-term circumstance that directly interferes with a student’s ability to participate in instruction, including assessments, where no alternate arrangements can be made and no appropriate supports or accommodations can be provided.
- An *ongoing medical condition*, unlike a medical emergency, is a situation in which the school and/or district is providing instruction and the student is participating in instruction and assessments with the supports or accommodations for which the student may be eligible.

The top of the form is to be completed by a licensed medical professional who is operating under the scope of their license. The bottom of the form is completed by the district.

Note: This information must be retained by the school district for two years after the end of the academic school year in which testing took place, is considered an educational record under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (45 C.F.R. 160.103 (2)(i)(ii); 20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 C.F.R. Part 99), and is considered private data per federal and state law. The Minnesota Department of Education may review this document to ensure requirements are met.

Completed by Medical Professional

1. Student name _____

2. What is the medical emergency?

3. When did this medical emergency start? _____

4. How long do you anticipate this medical emergency will last? _____

5. In your professional view, how does this medical emergency impact the student's ability to participate in daily instruction?

6. In your professional view, how does this medical emergency impact the student's ability to participate in required standardized assessments? For example, are there any considerations or concerns if the student is taking assessments online or paper?

Name of Clinic or Practice

Printed Name

License Number

Signature

Date

Completed by District

Student Information

Name (last, first, MI): _____

Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy): _____ Gender: _____ Grade: _____

MARSS/SSID (13 digits): _____ Test(s): _____

Testing Window

Provide information on the district's testing calendar and how the student could not be tested during that schedule due to the medical emergency.

Remedy Through Accommodations and Supports

Describe how the district reviewed the situation and determined that available supports and/or remedies would not allow the student to participate in statewide assessments in a similar manner to how instruction is being delivered.

Based on this documentation, does the student meet the criteria for a medical excuse from statewide assessments according to the *Procedures Manual*?

Yes

No

District Assessment Coordinator Signature

Date

Name (printed)

The following nondisclosure agreement is provided as a sample that districts may use with school officials who will have access to preliminary results and/or final embargoed results.



Sample Nondisclosure Agreement for Sharing Assessment and Accountability Results

This nondisclosure agreement applies to any preliminary or embargoed statewide testing or accountability data for the standards-based accountability assessments (Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments and Minnesota Test of Academic Skills) and English language proficiency accountability assessments (ACCESS for ELLs and WIDA Alternate ACCESS). This data is provided by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and may be available to the school district through secure reports, service provider systems, or other district data systems.

This agreement must be completed by any school officials who will have access to preliminary or embargoed results in any form, and includes school board members and contractors hired by the district. This agreement also includes charter school authorizers, if a separate data sharing agreement for these results is not already in place.

I understand that:

1. All assessment and accountability data shared by MDE with the school district are educational data as defined by the federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. 1232g and 34 C.F.R. Chapter 99, and by Minnesota Statutes, section 13.32.
2. Educational data that are related to an individual student are classified by FERPA and section 13.32 as private data, which means that the data are not public and cannot be shared with anyone who does not have either legal authority to access it or a signed parental/guardian consent to access it.
3. School officials or other authorized representatives of the school district may have access to private educational data if the district has determined that they have a legitimate educational interest in the educational data.
4. All assessment and accountability data, including summary data that are not about individual students, are under an embargo before they are released publicly. Embargoed results may not be shared or discussed with anyone who does not have authority to access them.

By accessing the assessment and accountability data made available by MDE, I agree and assure that:

1. I am a school official or other authorized representative of the school district.
2. The school district has determined that I have a legitimate educational interest in the educational data.
3. I will not share or discuss preliminary or embargoed assessment and accountability results in any form with anyone who does not have legal authority to access the data.
4. I will not share or discuss any assessment data related to individual students with anyone who does not have legal authority or a signed consent from a parent/guardian to access the data.
5. If I do not know whether someone has authority to access the data, I will not share it with them.
6. I understand that I should only access and use educational data to the extent needed to do my work. I will not access or use educational data for any reasons not related to my work and my authority to access the data.
7. I understand that educational data must be maintained in a secure manner that prevents unauthorized persons from accessing it. I will follow appropriate safeguards to reasonably and appropriately protect the privacy, security, and integrity of all educational data to which I have access.

Name (printed)

Signature

Date

Appendix B — Policies and Procedures

Building a Test: From Academic Standards to Scoring

The development of a statewide assessment is a meticulous process that takes place over a number of years. Minnesota contracts with assessment service providers in the process of building tests.

English Language Proficiency Accountability Assessments Process

Test Development

As a member of the WIDA consortium, Minnesota administers the ACCESS for ELLs (ACCESS) and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, which are developed by WIDA. **NEW!** Beginning in 2023–24, the WIDA Alternate ACCESS is aligned to the WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework: 2020 Edition. This updated assessment will have proficiency levels and cut scores developed during standard setting in the summer of 2024. The ACCESS is currently aligned to the 2012 version of the WIDA English Language Development Standards and will be aligned to the 2020 Edition in 2025–26.

As large-scale criterion-referenced assessments, the development process from standards development through standard setting is similar to the process outlined below for the standards-based accountability assessments. However, because of the nature of consortium-wide assessments, Minnesota educators are involved in different aspects of the ACCESS assessment development based on availability of openings and the need for participation by all WIDA consortium members over time.

- On an annual basis, educators from across the consortium are involved in the English language proficiency accountability assessments at several stages. This involvement ranges from initial generation of contextual themes to the review of items in different stages of the development cycle, including content review, standards alignment review, and bias and sensitivity review.
- Educators are chosen from states across the consortium based on years of teaching experience, teaching experience with English learners in general and special education programs, and representation within different teaching settings.
- Additional information about the WIDA assessment development process is available on the [Building a WIDA Assessment](#) page of the WIDA website (WIDA > Assess > Building a WIDA Assessment). Updates on the refreshed WIDA Alternate ACCESS can be found on the [WIDA Alternate ACCESS Updates](#) page of the WIDA website.

Scoring

After the assessments have been administered to students, and student responses and/or Test Administrator ratings are submitted to the service provider, every response is machine-scored or human-scored. The service provider has a rigorous process for hiring, training, qualifying, and monitoring human raters and rater-reliability.

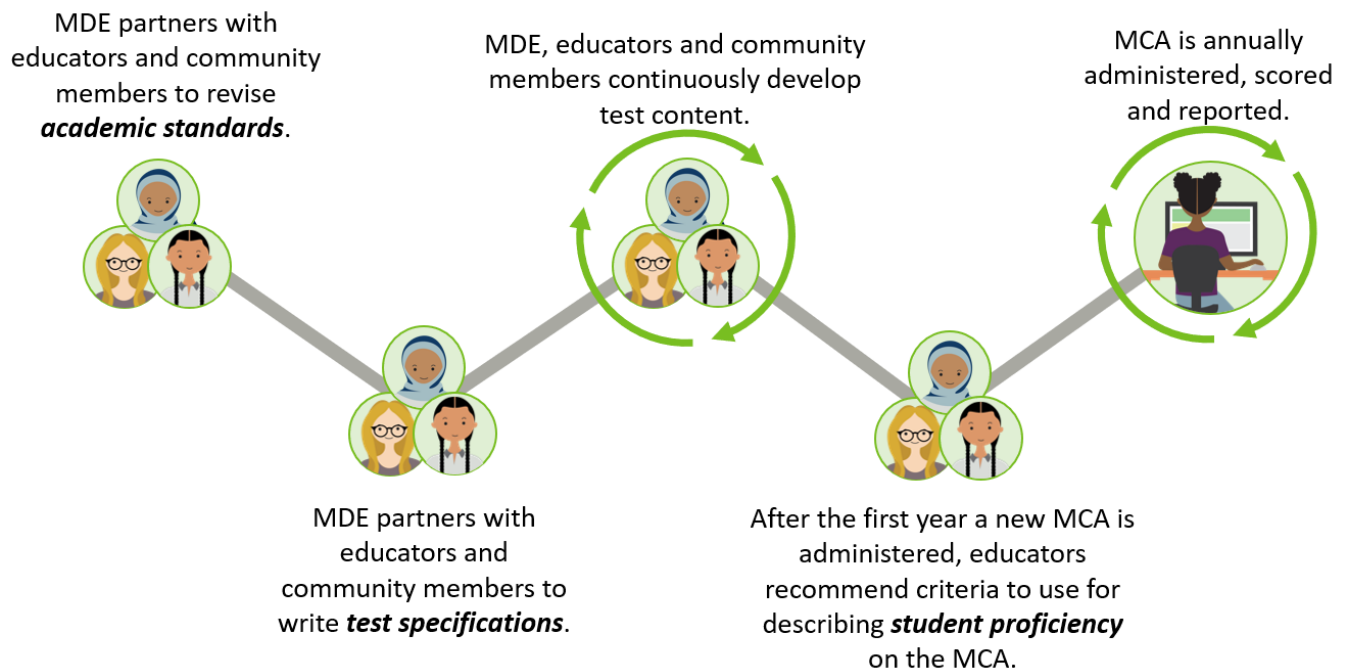
- For Kindergarten ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, tasks are rated by the Test Administrator administering the tests. Responses and ratings are captured in test booklets and sent to the service provider for scanning and scoring.
- For ACCESS Online Reading and Listening grades 1–12, responses are captured by the test delivery system for scoring by the service provider.
- For ACCESS Online Speaking and Writing grades 1–12, responses are captured by the test delivery system and scored by human raters at the service provider. Writing responses for grades 1–5 are captured in Writing test booklets and sent to the service provider for scanning and scoring by human raters.
- For ACCESS Paper Reading, Listening, and Writing grades 1–12, responses are captured in test booklets and sent to the service provider for scanning and scoring. Writing responses are scored by human raters.
- For ACCESS Paper Speaking grades 1–12, tasks are rated by the Test Administrator administering the tests. Ratings are captured in test booklets and sent to the service provider for scanning and scoring.

Standards Based-Accountability Assessments Process

Test Development

It takes at least two years to create and evaluate a test item before it is ready to be included in an assessment. Each step of the process makes an important contribution to the reliability and validity of the assessment. The Minnesota statewide assessments are designed to measure student learning of the Minnesota K–12 Academic Standards. The steps below outline how statewide assessments are created, beginning with the revision of the Minnesota academic standards. The MCA test development process is also outlined in an infographic available on the [Statewide Assessments](#) page of the Testing 1, 2, 3 website (Testing 1, 2, 3 > Assess > Statewide Assessments (under the Test Development heading)).

Process for Creating a New Test



1. The academic content standards are revised and defined based on the schedule determined by state legislation. Minnesota teachers and content experts write the Minnesota Academic Standards that delineate the knowledge, skills, and abilities students at each grade level should possess within each content area.
2. Test specifications are developed after the new academic standards are approved.
 - Test specifications provide a summary blueprint for test construction, specifying the portion of questions for each reporting category and outlining the essential features of the test design to provide consistency and transparency across test forms for the life of each assessment. Committees of teachers and content experts write the test specifications and consider comments after a period of public review.
 - The committee also provides information that guides item writers in their work and helps the assessment remain consistent from year to year regardless of item writers or test vendors involved.
 - More information is available about how the academic standards are assessed on the MCA and Alternate MCA by grade level and subject on the [MCA Content Resources](#) page of the Testing 1, 2, 3 website (Testing 1, 2, 3 > Assess > MCA Content Resources).
3. Test questions are developed and reviewed following the [Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing](#) (2014) guidelines for accessibility, fairness, bias, and sensitivity. The service provider is responsible for item development, publication, scoring, and reporting for the MDE-developed statewide assessments. Adhering to universal design principles, statewide assessments are developed to allow participation of the widest possible range of students, in a way that results in valid inferences about performance for all students who participate in the assessment. Test questions are intentionally designed for maximum readability and comprehensibility in order to be linguistically accessible to all students.
 - Contracted item writers are specifically trained to develop items that meet Minnesota’s mathematics and reading test specifications, as well as the test specifications for all three subjects of the alternate assessments. For reading, contracted passage finders seek out high quality reading passages that reflect the diversity of Minnesota students, are free of bias and sensitivity concerns, and amenable for item development.
 - Minnesota science educators are trained to develop phenomena, items, and simulations to meet Minnesota’s science test specifications.
 - All test content is subsequently reviewed by Minnesota educators (in Educator Review Committees for items and passages) and community members (in Community Review Committees). These committees advise MDE on whether each stimulus and item should be approved, edited, or rejected based on the age- and grade-appropriateness of each stimulus and item as well as the alignment and rigor of the benchmark for each item (educator review of items); whether passages are age- and grade-appropriate (educator review of passages); and whether items, phenomena, and passages are fair and equitable (community review).
 - An item is not included in a student’s score until after it has been field-tested and its data reviewed by an Educator Review Committee. If the item is approved for use, it is then put into the operational item pool the following year.
 - More information about MCA/Alternate MCA Review Committees is available on the [Join an MCA/Alternate MCA Review Committee](#) page of the MDE website (MDE > Districts, Schools and

Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > Join an MCA/Alternate MCA Review Committee).

- More information about test content development is available on the [Statewide Assessments](#) page of the Testing 1, 2, 3 website (Testing 1, 2, 3 > Assess > Statewide Assessments (under the Test Development heading)).
4. Once test questions have been approved, MDE and the service provider construct a test form or build an adaptive test using an algorithm that matches the test specifications. For example, if the mathematics test specifications require that Strand 4 (Data Analysis) make up a particular percentage of a test’s points, the appropriate number of Strand 4 questions will be included on the test. More information about test construction is available on the [MCA Test Structure](#) page of the Testing 1, 2, 3 website (Testing 1, 2, 3 > Assess > MCA Test Structure).

The schedule for revising statewide standards is found in Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.021, subdivision 4 and is outlined in the table below. This table reflects possible implementation of statewide assessments based on the revised schedule for statewide academic standards.

Introduction of the MCA-IV and Alternate MCA-IV as required by Minnesota Statutes, Section 120B.021

| Year | Science | Reading | Mathematics |
|---------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2022–23 | Items Field Tested | Items Field Tested | Test Specifications Written |
| 2023–24 | Items Field Tested | Items Field Tested | Items Developed |
| 2024–25 | MCA-IV and Alternate MCA-IV Operational | Items Field Tested | Items Field Tested |
| 2025–26 | | MCA-IV and Alternate MCA-IV Operational | Items Field Tested* |

* First year of the operational assessment will be determined following Rulemaking.

Scoring

After the assessments have been administered to students and answers are submitted to the service provider, every item is machine-scored or human-scored.

- The responses to multiple-choice and technology-enhanced items are captured by the test delivery system and scored electronically. Numerous quality control (QC) steps ensure that the responses are captured accurately. Refer to *Preliminary Student-Level Results* in Chapter 11 for additional information about reviews of student responses.
- Performance tasks on the MTAS are scored by the Test Administrator administering the test; following the test, the scores are entered into the online service provider system by district staff.

Standard Setting

The first year that tests are administered operationally, they must go through a process to set the performance level expectations for students; this process is called “standard setting.” Using rigorous, carefully defined procedures that have been widely used and validated in Minnesota and many other states, the psychometric staff at MDE and the service provider establish the achievement levels for the new tests with the input of educators and community members. Due to the need to complete this process, reporting for new assessments is delayed past the typical results release timeframes.

Prior to convening the standard-setting committees, a team of MDE content specialists, assessment specialists, and Minnesota educators develop Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs) based on the Minnesota Academic Standards and the test specifications for a given assessment. The ALDs provide a detailed set of descriptions of the knowledge, skills, and abilities associated with each of the four achievement levels for a particular grade and subject.

The standard-setting committees begin their work once scoring and preliminary data analysis are completed. Minnesota educators (in standard-setting committees) and community members (in community review committees) review the ALDs and the content of the assessment; they then recommend cut scores to determine student performance levels that correspond to each of the four achievement levels. The committees also consider how proposed cut scores could impact students and schools before they recommend cut scores to Minnesota’s Education Commissioner.

After the Commissioner has approved the cut scores, specific methodology is documented in standard-setting reports, which are available on the [Technical Reports](#) page of the MDE website (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > Technical Reports).

MDE Test Security Procedures

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) is charged with investigating and resolving all alleged violations of test security. An action taken by staff that creates a violation of test security or data integrity is subject to consequences up to and including those outlined in Minnesota Statutes, section 122A.20. Oversight and investigation of these violations is done by the Test Security and Data Integrity (TSDI) team of the Academic Standards, Instruction and Assessment division.

The test security violation process serves many purposes, allowing MDE to:

- Work with districts to identify and prevent future test security issues.
- Collect information and analyze trends to identify district training needs or policy and procedure updates that may be needed.
- Create a culture of test security and integrity for the state through the process of defining, collecting, and following up on violations.

In addition, the test security violation data collection process provides MDE's educational partners with a transparent view of MDE's test security and data integrity system, which is achieved through the communications with districts throughout the reporting process and/or through MDE-created reports. Partners include superintendents/directors, Minnesota's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), the Office of the Legislative Auditor, and the U.S. Department of Education through peer review documentation.

Initial Report of Test Security Violation

Information about possible test security violations may be provided to MDE in the following ways:

- If a security violation occurs in the district, the District Assessment Coordinator collects information and submits it to MDE via Assessment Security Records (ASR) in Test WES.
- If individuals submit test security concerns to MDE through the Test Security Tip Line or an email or phone call, MDE will follow up as necessary with the district to investigate the alleged incident, depending upon the nature of each report and the amount of information provided.
- Concerns about test security may be observed or discovered during MDE site monitoring or audits.

If concerns are reported through the Test Security Tip Line, by email or phone, or discovered during MDE site monitoring or audits, additional information may be requested from district personnel and/or MDE may request that the district report a security violation through ASR.

MDE Investigation and Follow-Up

Upon reviewing the information provided to MDE, several outcomes may occur. These include the following, which are communicated in an email to the District Assessment Coordinator with the superintendent/director included:

- Closure of the ASR with no further action required by the district and/or school.

- Required follow-up by the district and/or school such as additional training for an individual or individuals.
- Instruction to invalidate the test score(s).
- Other corrective action in conjunction with Academic Standards, Instruction and Assessment staff at MDE, including MDE attendance and/or participation during a district’s internal test security training or a post-assessment test security review with various district officials.
- Referral of the incident to the Data Practices staff at MDE.
- Referral of the incident to the Assistance and Compliance Division within MDE.
- Referral of the incident to the Minnesota Department of Administration for statutory violations.

A reported incident is referred to the Data Practices staff at MDE if the violation affects student data privacy. While the majority of student data privacy issues will be handled through the typical follow-up procedures, additional notification of data privacy issues may be provided to the superintendent/director.

When a reported incident is referred to the Assistance and Compliance Division, a formal investigation is conducted. Investigative procedures will vary but may include telephone or on-site interviews, further requests for written submissions, reviews of test security procedures, or other procedures deemed necessary. Assistance and Compliance will review the results of the investigation and recommend action, which may include:

- Closure of the case after finding that no violation has occurred.
- A plan for corrective action. If the investigation confirms a violation of test security, required corrective action(s) will be incorporated into the investigative report. MDE will follow up in the future to ensure the action(s) took place.
- Forwarding the findings to the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) or Board of School Administrators, whichever has jurisdiction, to conduct an inquiry into whether disciplinary action against a license is warranted for possible educator/administrator misconduct pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 122A.20, subdivision 1(a). In certain cases, the Minnesota Attorney General’s office may be involved with this inquiry.

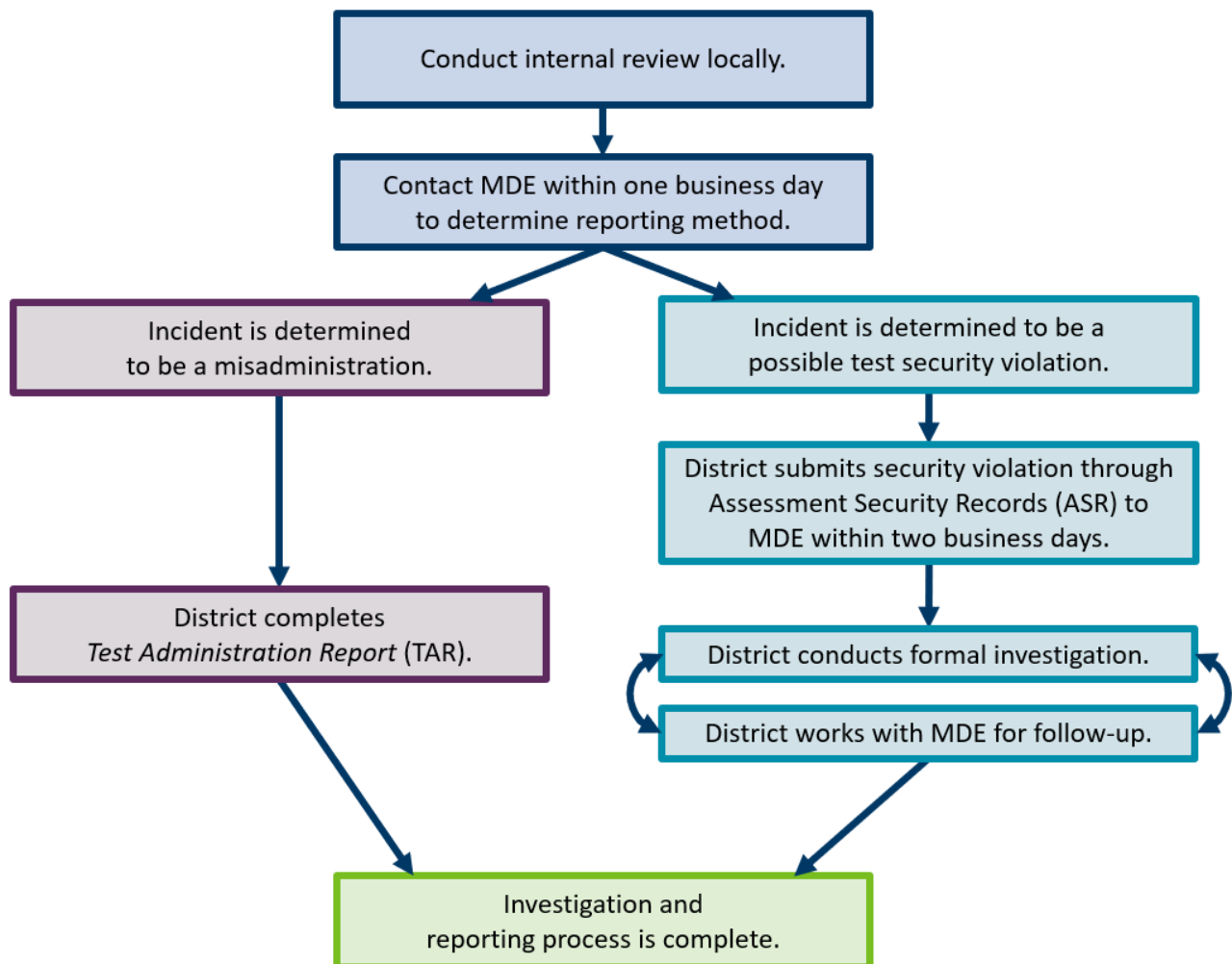
The district may determine any additional consequences for staff involved if misconduct occurred.

Test Security Investigation Guide

To facilitate the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) in carrying out its role in maintaining the security and integrity of statewide assessments, this guide has been created to help schools and districts ensure that best practices are followed when testing irregularities occur. This document is designed to serve as a guide for local test security investigations by districts as well as a foundation for districts to develop their own test security investigation plans. This document is advisory and any questions should be sent to mde.testing@state.mn.us.

When a security violation or other event occurs that threatens test data integrity, the District Assessment Coordinator sets in motion a process of determining the facts of the incident and reporting them to MDE. The process is illustrated below and then described in greater detail.

Investigation Process Overview



Incident Discovery

There are multiple ways to discover a possible testing violation; once it has been discovered, there are specific protocols to assist those involved with reporting, reviewing, and investigating the incident. Here are some of the more common ways an incident is reported:

- Staff informs the School Assessment Coordinator and/or District Assessment Coordinator; the District Assessment Coordinator then informs MDE.
- A student, parent/guardian, or other member of the public reports an incident to school staff or to MDE. Reports to MDE may be received through the tip line, email, or a phone call.
- A student, parent/guardian, or other member of the public reports an incident to the media; MDE reviews the report and will follow up as appropriate.

Employees who report incidents can request whistleblower protections and their identities are considered confidential.

Initial Review vs. Formal Investigation

The initial review determines an outline of what may have occurred. This review is often, but not always, performed by the District or School Assessment Coordinator. Therefore, these individuals need to be aware of district protocols for involving administrators or human resources representatives when initiating reviews of incidents impacting test administrations. After gathering initial information, the next step is to contact MDE to determine the appropriate reporting method. Incidents that are misadministrations and are unlikely to impact student results, test security, and/or data integrity should be documented on a *Test Administration Report (TAR)* which the district keeps on file.

If MDE indicates the incident should be reported as a security violation through Assessment Security Records (ASR), this documentation should be completed and submitted within two business days of the incident. If it has not occurred already, the District or School Assessment Coordinator should inform the building administrator and/or district administration so that a formal district investigation can be initiated according to internal district policy. It is also highly recommended that the district stay in contact with MDE during this process.

Key Questions and Steps in a Formal Investigation

When creating or carrying out an investigation plan, take the considerations listed below into account. Following these guidelines will help ensure the investigation is effective and satisfies all procedural requirements, including protecting the rights and privacy of all parties involved. In cases of educator misconduct, many of these steps will likely be completed by building or district administration and/or the district's human resources department. To be prepared to conduct a formal district investigation, it is strongly recommended that districts create a plan that outlines the roles and responsibilities of all who may be involved with a test security and/or data integrity incident, the starting point and the end point of an investigation, and the required steps that must occur. An internal plan can be used in staff trainings and serve as the document the district follows when an incident arises. Note: If district administrators are implicated or if other circumstances so warrant, external investigators could be hired to conduct an independent investigation.

Determining the Scope of the Incident

Ask and answer the following questions:

- What is the nature of the incident, who is involved, and what is the risk to students, data privacy, test security, and data integrity?
- Are all secure test materials accounted for and secure?
- Has cheating occurred, and is it necessary to take steps to ensure data integrity?
- Is the incident over, or does it continue to pose a threat to test security or data integrity locally or statewide?

Fact Finding

- Coordinate with the building/district administrator; follow the district's investigation plan if one exists.
- Determine and document what evidence exists to support the determination that a violation occurred.
- Collect and retain all pertinent documents, such as documentation of completed training.
- Interview all individuals who were involved or may have information about the incident.
- Collect and review any evidence that may exist on an electronic device if one was a part of the incident.

Due Diligence

- Notify all involved that the investigation is confidential and cannot be discussed with others.
- Consider whether an attorney or union representative is needed when interviewing staff.
- Consider whether a parent or guardian should be present when interviewing a student.
- Consult with MDE during the investigation and carry out any state-required mitigation requested by MDE.

Prohibited Electronic Devices Investigation Guide

Use of an electronic device during test administration can lead to a security and/or data integrity violation. This guide is meant to help districts with follow-up actions if an electronic device is accessible and suspected of having been used during test administration by a student. This guide is advisory and any questions should be sent to mde.testing@state.mn.us.

Prevention Keys

As outlined in Chapter 8 of the *Procedures Manual*, access to electronic devices, including cell phones and wearable technology, is prohibited during test administration, and districts are required to have and implement policies and procedures specific to their district and schools.

- Districts should require all students who enter the test room and will retain possession of a cell phone to show the Test Administrator or Test Monitor that it is on silent or turned off and not accessible. Wearable technology must be removed (as it is considered accessible if worn). If devices will be collected, districts must ensure they account for all devices, including wearable technology.
- All staff who are present in the test room should have received proper training and should be fully aware that these devices are not allowed to be accessible to students during testing.
- Test Administrators and Test Monitors need to be actively monitoring the room throughout the test administration so that any incident is identified immediately. This includes observing if a student is paying special attention to a watch or any other device.

Key Requirements for a Search

When a prohibited device is accessed during or after testing, the district will need to verify if the device was used and, if so, whether test content was impacted. When collecting and documenting evidence of the incident, it is critical that personnel involved understand the applicable abilities and limitations. Applicable federal case law states that public school personnel can search the belongings of a student on school grounds without a search warrant but only if specific criteria have been met:

1. The search was justified at the inception of the incident: There must be a reasonable belief by school personnel at the time that a search will discover evidence that the student has broken or is currently breaking school policy and/or the law.
2. The search must be reasonably related in scope to the violation and cannot be unreasonably intrusive: The search can only focus on what caused the search to arise and cannot go beyond that. It *does not* include searching for evidence of other types of wrongdoing unrelated to the violation in question.

Collection and Documentation of Evidence

Because accessing a prohibited electronic device during test administration is a violation of MDE and district policies and therefore fulfills the “justified at the inception of the incident” requirement, it is necessary to collect and search the device to document possible evidence. This ensures a proper investigation can be carried out and MDE can take the necessary steps to mitigate the impact of the potential violation. The following steps should occur in this process to ensure that the “reasonable in scope” requirement is also met:

1. Notify the DAC and building administrator immediately that a prohibited device was accessible during test administration and may have been used.
2. Retain possession of the device and do not allow the student to use it any further.
3. Ask the student, or a parent/legal guardian, to voluntarily allow a search of the device. If this does not occur, then a school administrator (or similar level district official) should conduct a search of the device that is reasonably limited in scope based upon the alleged violation. The parent/legal guardian of the student should be kept informed of what occurred and any findings throughout this process.
4. Gather and document evidence to determine if the device was used in any way to capture, retain, and/or communicate test content.
 - Contact MDE for further guidance on documenting the evidence for the specific situation before it is deleted or removed from the device.
 - Documentation must include the applicable information about the test (including subject, item number, student MARSS/SSID number), a detailed description of how the test content is captured (such as entire passage is captured, or a general description was written), and whether it was communicated or shared.
5. Submission of a security violation through Assessment Security Records (ASR) to MDE will depend upon the outcome of evidence collection.
 - If the evidence gathered leads to the determination that test content was captured, retained, and/or communicated in any manner, or if the device was used to potentially assist and communicate with another student in any manner, then submission through ASR is necessary.
 - If the evidence gathered does not lead to either of the determinations listed above, then submission through ASR is not necessary. However, a *Test Administration Report* (TAR) is still required due to the test invalidation; documentation should include mention of the search and the purpose for it.

Situational Examples

In the following examples, a search of the device is justified at the inception of the incident as use of the device during testing violates MDE and district policy. If the device was not used in violation of the policy, a search of the device for other reasons is not justified.

Situational Example #1

It is reported that a student took a picture with their cell phone during testing.

- A search within reasonable scope could include reviewing pictures taken during test administration and social media locations where an identified picture could have been posted.
- A reasonable search would NOT include searching pictures on the device taken prior to testing.

Situational Example #2

A student who has past involvement in illegal activities uses their cell phone during testing. The student was seen typing on the device.

- A search within reasonable scope could include reviewing any texts received or sent during test administration.
- A reasonable search would NOT include looking through texts prior to testing to seek evidence of other activities.

Situational Example #3

It is reported that a cell phone was used to assist with a test question.

- A search within reasonable scope could include reviewing web browser history to ensure sites were not accessed to assist with a question during test administration.
- A reasonable search would NOT include looking through web browser history prior to testing.

District Test Security Procedure Requirements

Each school district must have a written district test security procedure that addresses how test security policies and procedures will be implemented in the district for all statewide assessments. Districts may create their own procedure or use the *District Test Security Procedure Template* available on the [Policies and Procedures](#) page of the PearsonAccess Next website (under Resources & Training > Policies and Procedures), but all areas specified below must be addressed. If procedures vary by assessment, this must be noted, as applicable. Districts may add areas or elements to the procedure as needed, and separate procedures must be specified by school if they vary. If the district procedure references other district policies and procedures that are in place, they should be included with this procedure. Appendix C includes the evaluation rubric MDE uses when district procedures are requested for review.

- Identifying who the District Assessment Coordinator(s) and School Assessment Coordinator(s) are for the current school year. Specific names that identify who is responsible for each task can be included directly in the procedure or provided separately (Chapter 3).
- Identifying the plan for the District Assessment Coordinator (and/or other designated staff) to monitor testing within the district (Chapter 5).
- Specifying who is responsible for determining the testing calendar, ensuring it is posted to the district website no later than Oct. 1, and keeping test administration dates updated (Chapter 6).
- Ensuring all staff involved in any aspect of testing complete required trainings annually for their role before test administration, and documenting completed trainings (Chapter 7).
- Providing all staff with the MDE test security tip line and MDE contact information for reporting security concerns (Chapter 5).
- Determining the following district policies and procedures for testing and how they will be communicated to district staff prior to testing:
 - Preparing students for test administration using the provided student resources, including determining how resources will be used (Chapter 7).
 - Reminding students of the importance of keeping test content secure and acting with honesty and integrity (Chapter 5).
 - Determining process for documenting reasons why students may not be participating in testing (for example, parent/guardian refusals, medical excuse) and communicating information to applicable school staff (Chapter 9).
 - Determining process for how information will be communicated to applicable school staff to ensure that students take the correct assessment (MCA or MTAS; ACCESS or WIDA Alternate ACCESS) and/or receive universal supports and/or accommodations required (Chapter 4).

- Preparing rooms for test administration, including assigning the number of students per Test Administrator/Test Monitor (especially for ACCESS Writing and Speaking), student seating/spacing to maintain test security, the plan for removing or covering materials on walls and desks, and considerations for any security cameras present in the testing rooms (Chapter 7).
- Verifying materials allowed/prohibited for testing and how allowable materials (such as headphones, scratch paper) will be gathered and provided (Chapter 7).
- Developing a plan to get students to their correct locations for testing (for example, testing rooms and computer labs, small group, or individual settings) (Chapter 7).
- Developing a plan to track which students test with which Test Monitor/Test Administrator for all test sessions (including any other trained staff present in the testing room, such as paraprofessionals providing assistance) (Chapter 8).
- Ensuring students do not access or use cell phones, wearable technology, or other devices (for example, collecting cell phones, verifying they are turned off and put away, ensuring wearable technology is not worn) and determining what action will be taken if the procedure is not followed (Chapter 8).
- Determining the district’s plan for the following situations, including how to monitor students in each of them (Chapter 8):
 - Breaks for all students during testing (for example, whether they are planned and their duration) and how test content will be secured during breaks.
 - Use of the restroom or other interruptions during testing, including coordinating or supervising students from multiple rooms.
 - What to do if an unexpected situation arises with students during testing (for example, illness, behavioral issue, or early dismissal for activity).
 - What to do if an entire group of students needs to leave during testing (for example, emergency situation or fire drill).
 - What to do when the Test Administrator or Test Monitor becomes ill or needs to leave during testing.
 - What students will do if they complete testing early (for example, go to another location or remain in the testing room), and what paper activities they will complete if they remain in the testing room.
 - What students will do if they need extra time to complete testing (for example, go to another room, makeup testing on another day).
 - What the plan is for students who have finished testing on a previous day.
- Determining the points of contact and the processes for the following situations:
 - Who will provide assistance/answer questions, and what the process is for contacting others for assistance if a problem or question arises during the testing so active monitoring can continue (Chapter 8).

- What to do if a student reports an error or technical issue with a test item and who to communicate that information to following testing (Chapter 8).
- Who Test Administrators and Test Monitors should contact in case of an emergency (Chapter 8).
- Who to report misadministrations and security violations to within each school and how that information will be communicated to the District Assessment Coordinator (Chapter 5).
- Determining what Test Administrators/Test Monitors and staff may and may not discuss with students about the test administration experience following test administration (Chapter 8).
- Establishing the process and assigning staff for entering student responses from MCA paper test materials and MTAS data online (Chapter 8).
- Establishing the process and chain of custody for how all secure test materials for both online and paper administrations will be kept secure before, during, and after testing (Chapters 5, 8, and 10):
 - The specific locations where secure materials are stored in each school prior to, during, and after testing at each school.
 - Who has access to secure test materials.
 - Who will receive, secure, and distribute materials to schools (if applicable).
 - Who will inventory and organize secure test materials.
 - How will distribution of test materials for test administrations be handled and who is responsible.
 - What the process is for securing test materials between test sessions.
 - Who will be responsible for collecting, inventorying, and returning secure test materials as well as securely disposing of materials as required.
- Determining the plan for providing access to test results (Chapter 11):
 - Whether preliminary results will be provided to students, families, and/or staff, and what will be communicated about preliminary results.
 - Who the embargoed final results will be shared with.
 - How final results will be shared within the district (for example, load to data warehouse or student information system or provide access to service provider systems).
 - How information regarding what it means to abide by the embargo (such as, how preliminary and final results can and cannot be shared) will be provided to staff who may have access to or be part of discussions about results.
 - How Individual Student Reports (ISRs) will be provided to families, considering a method that maintains student data privacy.

Test Administration Calendar Examples

The test administration calendar examples provided below are meant to show some options for how specific dates for test administration can be included on the district testing calendar. MDE does not require that these examples be used as templates; they are instead meant to show the level of specificity required in terms of posting by 1) school, 2) test, 3) subject/domain, 4) grade, and 5) specific planned days of administration. Note: District Example 2 (below) provides an example for a district that exists within a single school building (for example, charter school or grades K–12 in one building).

The following examples do not include other required information such as the purpose of each assessment, the estimated testing time for each test type, or the district’s timeline and format for disseminating assessment results; refer to the District Testing Calendar section in Chapter 6 for detailed information on all testing calendar requirements.

Note: All information provided here is sample information and does not necessarily reflect correct testing or calendar dates and/or the district-required assessments used by districts; this information has been included for sample purposes only.

District Example 1 (district with multiple schools)

Elementary 1 (Grades 3–5)

| | | | |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Elementary 1 | Districtwide Local Assessments | | |
| | Districtwide Reading Assessment Grade 3: Oct. 5, May 20 Grade 4: Oct. 6, May 21 Grade 5: Oct. 7, May 22 | Districtwide Mathematics Assessment Grade 3: Sept. 24, May 18 Grade 4: Sept. 25, May 18 Grade 5: Sept. 26, May 19 | |
| | Statewide Assessments | | |
| | ACCESS Listening Grade 3: Feb. 15 Grade 4: Feb. 15 Grade 5: Feb. 17 | ACCESS Reading Grade 3: Feb. 18 Grade 4: Feb. 18 Grade 5: Feb. 19 | ACCESS Speaking Grade 3: Feb. 20 Grade 4: Feb. 20 Grade 5: Feb. 22 |
| | ACCESS Writing Grade 3: Feb. 23 Grade 4: Feb. 23 Grade 5: Feb. 24 | | Reading MTAS Grades 3, 4, & 5: March 27–29 Mathematics MTAS Grades 3, 4, & 5: April 3–5 Science MTAS Grade 5: April 13-15 |
| | Reading MCA Grade 3: March 13–14 Grade 4: March 15–16 Grade 5: March 16–17 | Mathematics MCA Grade 3: April 15–16 Grade 4: April 17–18 Grade 5: April 21–22 | Science MCA Grade 5: April 23–24 |

Elementary 2 (Grades K–5)

| Elementary 2 | Districtwide Local Assessments | | |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | Districtwide Reading Assessment Grade 3: Oct. 5, May 20 Grade 4: Oct. 6, May 21 Grade 5: Oct. 7, May 22 | Districtwide Mathematics Assessment Grade 3: Sept. 24, May 18 Grade 4: Sept. 25, May 18 Grade 5: Sept. 26, May 19 | |
| | Statewide Assessments | | |
| | ACCESS Listening Grades 1–3: Feb. 7 Grade 4: Feb. 8 Grade 5: Feb. 9 | ACCESS Reading Grades 1–3: Feb. 14 Grade 4: Feb. 15 Grade 5: Feb. 16 | ACCESS Speaking Grades 1–3: Feb. 21 Grade 4: Feb. 22 Grade 5: Feb. 23 |
| | ACCESS Writing Grade 1: Feb. 23 Grades 2–4: Feb. 24 Grade 5: Feb. 25 | Kindergarten ACCESS: Feb. 7–11 WIDA Alternate ACCESS Grades 1–5: Listening: Feb. 7–11 Reading: Feb. 14–19 Speaking: Feb. 21–25 Writing: Feb. 28–March 4 | Reading MTAS Grades 3, 4, & 5: March 13–18 Mathematics MTAS Grades 3, 4, & 5: March 20–24 Science MTAS Grade 5: March 27–30 |
| | Reading MCA Grade 3: April 4–5 Grade 4: April 4–5 Grade 5: April 4–5 | Mathematics MCA Grade 3: April 12–13 Grade 4: April 12–13 Grade 5: April 12–13 | Science MCA Grade 5: April 10–11 |

Middle School (Grades 6–8)

| Middle School | Districtwide Local Assessments | | |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | None | | |
| | Statewide Assessments | | |
| | ACCESS Listening Grade 6: Feb. 18 Grade 7: Feb. 19 Grade 8: Feb. 20 | ACCESS Reading Grade 6: Feb. 24 Grade 7: Feb. 24 Grade 8: Feb. 24 | ACCESS Speaking Grade 6: Feb. 25 Grade 7: Feb. 25 Grade 8: Feb. 26 |
| | ACCESS Writing Grade 6: Feb. 27 Grade 7: Feb. 27 Grade 8: Feb. 28 | WIDA Alternate ACCESS: Grade 6, 7, & 8 Listening: Feb. 7–11 Reading: Feb. 14–19 Speaking: Feb. 21–25 Writing: Feb. 28–March 4 | Reading MTAS Grades 6–8: March 14–25 Mathematics MTAS Grade 6: March 20–31 Grades 7–8: March 21–April 2 Science MTAS Grade 8: April 24–May 3 |
| | Reading MCA Grade 6: March 17–18 Grade 7: March 18–19 Grade 8: March 19–20 | Mathematics MCA Grade 6: April 12–13 Grade 7: April 13–14 Grade 8: April 14–15 | Science MCA Grade 8: April 24–25 |

High School (Grades 9–12)

| | | | |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| High School | College Entrance Exam | | |
| | ACT Grades 11–12: April 2 (Makeup date April 20) | | |
| | Statewide Assessments | | |
| | <p>ACCESS</p> <p>Reading Grades 9–12: Feb. 18</p> <p>Writing Grades 9–12: Feb. 19</p> <p>Speaking Grades 9–12: Feb. 20</p> <p>Listening Grades 9–12: Feb. 21</p> | <p>WIDA Alternate ACCESS: Grades 9–12</p> <p>Listening: Feb. 7–11</p> <p>Reading: Feb. 14–19</p> <p>Speaking: Feb. 21–25</p> <p>Writing: Feb. 28–March 4</p> | <p>Reading MTAS Grade 10: March 10–12</p> <p>Mathematics MTAS Grade 11: March 16–19</p> <p>Science MTAS Grade 10: April 14–16</p> |
| | <p>Reading MCA</p> <p>Grade 10: April 2</p> | <p>Mathematics MCA</p> <p>Grade 11: April 4</p> | <p>Science MCA</p> <p>Grade 10: April 8</p> |

District Example 2 (district with one K–12 building)

Districtwide local assessment:

- Mathematics Grades 2, 3, 4, and 5: all on 10/3 and 5/10
- Mathematics Grade 6, 7, and 8: all on 10/4 and 5/11
- Reading Grade 2, 3, 4, and 5: all on 10/5 and 5/12
- Reading Grade 6, 7, and 8: all on 10/6 and 5/13

English language proficiency accountability assessments:

ACCESS:

- Kindergarten: administered week of 2/4
- Listening Grades 1–12: all grades on 2/4
- Reading Grades 1–12: all grades on 2/5
- Speaking Grades 1–12: all grades on 2/6
- Writing Grades 1–12: all grades on 2/7

College Entrance Exam (state required offering):

ACT: Grades 11–12: 4/10, makeup date 4/20

Standards-based accountability assessments:

Mathematics MCA:

- Grade 3: 3/5–3/6
- Grade 4: 3/5–3/6
- Grade 5: 3/5–3/6
- Grade 6: 3/7–3/8
- Grade 7: 3/7–3/8
- Grade 8: 3/7–3/8
- Grade 11: 3/13–3/14
- Grade 7: 3/13–3/14
- Grade 8: 3/13–3/14
- Grade 10: 3/20–3/21

Science MCA:

- Grade 5: 3/20–3/21
- Grade 8: 3/21–3/22
- High School: 3/22–3/23

MTAS:

Reading MCA:

- Grade 3: 3/12–3/13
- Grade 4: 3/12–3/13
- Grade 5: 3/12–3/13
- Grade 6: 3/13–3/14
- Reading Grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10: administered week of 3/5
- Mathematics Grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 11: administered week of 3/12
- Science Grades 5, 8, and 11: administered on same day on 4/9

Calculator Use General Guidelines

All MCA and MTAS mathematics and science test items can be solved in a variety of ways; therefore, calculators are not required. However, they may be used to answer items when a calculator is allowed.

Overview

Refer to *Calculator Use* in Chapter 8 for detailed information about calculator use for online MCA, paper MCA, and MTAS, including the use of other materials (such as mathematics manipulatives or tables). The following table provides a summary of what is addressed in Chapter 8.

General Calculator Use Information

| Test | Can Handheld Be Used? | Notes |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Online Grade 3–8 Mathematics MCA | No | The online calculator in TestNav is available when calculator use is allowed. If an IEP or 504 plan states that a handheld calculator must be used, a paper test book must be used. |
| Online Grade 11 Mathematics MCA | Yes | The online calculator in TestNav is available throughout the entire test. A handheld calculator can be used instead of or alongside the online calculator. |
| Online Science MCA | Yes | The online calculator in TestNav is available for items on the test that may ask the student to complete simple mathematical computations. Any type of handheld calculator can be used instead of or alongside the online calculator. |
| Paper Grade 3–8 Mathematics MCA | Yes; allowed segments | Handheld calculators may be used, except for Segment 1 (the non-calculator segment). The type of calculator required is as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grades 3–5: Standard or four-function • Grades 6–7: Scientific • Grade 8: Graphing |

| Test | Can Handheld Be Used? | Notes |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Paper Grade 11 Mathematics MCA | Yes | Handheld calculators may be used throughout the test. The type of calculator required is a graphing calculator. |
| Paper Science MCA | Yes; allowed items | Since these types of items are not included on the science test each year, the item in the test book will indicate whether a calculator can be used. Any type of handheld calculator may be used; standard or four-function calculators are all that is required, but scientific or graphing calculators are also allowed. |
| Mathematics and Science MTAS | Yes | Calculators or anything that the student uses as a calculator (such as mathematics manipulatives or assistive technology devices) may be used on any tasks. |

General Guidelines

The information in this section is intended to be a general description of allowable practices related to calculator use. It is not meant to be an exhaustive list of specific calculators, devices, or technologies. Refer to Chapter 8 for specific information on the use of handheld calculators. Note: As technology changes, these policies will be reviewed and may be updated.

- Students must be given an opportunity to become familiar with the handheld calculator or online calculator before testing. During testing, Test Monitors will not be able to assist students with the use of calculators. The only exceptions are if a handheld calculator is not functioning (for example, dead batteries) or if the online calculator prevents a student from accessing an item, responding to an item, or moving within a test. For further information, refer to *What Help Can Test Administrators and Test Monitors Give to Students* in Chapter 8.
- Students may use their own calculator, or one provided by the school, when a handheld calculator is allowed.
- Students may not share calculators.
- Students may not use instructions for their handheld calculators during the test.
- Students with memory-enabled graphing calculators are not allowed to bring stored examples into the testing session, access programs during testing, or store the test questions afterwards. Additional requirements for memory-enabled calculators are listed below.
- Students may be asked at any time to surrender their calculator for examination by a Test Monitor and may be asked to delete programs on the calculator.

- When handheld calculators are allowed, follow the requirements listed below by grade level for Mathematics MCA. Using a more technologically advanced calculator than the one specified provides assistance that invalidates what is being assessed (for example, using a scientific calculator instead of a four-function calculator for grade 5). Using a less technologically advanced calculator than the type specified (for example, using a four-function calculator instead of a graphing calculator for grade 8) is allowed but not recommended as students do not have the same access to additional functions the calculator provides.
 - Standard or four-function calculators (required for grades 3–5 for mathematics)
 - Scientific calculators (required for grades 6–7 for mathematics)
 - Graphing calculators (for example, the TI-83, TI-84 Plus series, and TI-Nspire, without computer algebra systems, are acceptable; required for grades 8 and 11 for mathematics)
 - Standard or four-function, scientific, or graphing calculators may be used for Science MCA.
 - Standard, scientific, or graphing calculators with a talking feature may also be used in an individual setting if its use is documented in the IEP or 504 plan.
 - Use of a device calculator application as determined by the IEP or 504 plan team for the assistive technology accommodation is allowed as long as the guidelines in this appendix are followed, Internet access is turned off, and other applications are not accessed. The student must test in an individual setting to ensure the device is used only as a calculator and that the required type of calculator is used (four-function, scientific, or graphing).
 - Note: While specific Texas Instruments calculators are the type of calculator available in TestNav for online testing, any brand of calculator may be used when handheld calculators are allowed.
- The following are prohibited (except as an approved accommodation specified in Chapter 4):
 - Web-based calculators or calculator apps accessed from another device (for example, a Chromebook)
 - Calculators with built-in computer algebra systems (CAS)
 - Cell phones, tablets, laptop computers, or any other devices that can electronically send, receive, or capture information
 - Electronic writing pads or pen-input/stylus-driven devices
 - Calculators with a typewriter keypad (a QWERTY keyboard similar in appearance and function to a word-processing keyboard with function and letter keys)
 - Calculators with an infrared data port (not allowed unless students completely cover the infrared data port with heavy opaque material such as duct tape)
 - Calculator modules that allow access to the Internet (such as the module that attaches to the TI-Nspire CX)

Handheld Calculator Memory Clearing Policy

Students with memory-enabled calculators are not allowed to bring stored examples, formulas, or programs into the test session, access programs during testing, or store the test questions afterwards. For this reason, a graphing calculator must either:

- Have its memory cleared both **before** and **after** each test session, or
- Have a feature that temporarily disables all flash applications and calculator files (for example, the TI-Nspire has “Press to Test” mode).

Test Monitors are required to check memory-enabled calculators before the test and disable any stored programs and applications by either clearing the memory both before and after the test session or by using the temporary disabling feature. Test Monitors must invoke the temporary disabling feature, if available, at the beginning of each test session and can return it to normal functionality at the end of each test session. Note that clearing the calculator memory will delete stored programs or applications. Students should be told prior to test day to save all data and stored programs on a computer or different calculator that is not being used for the test.

If a calculator can neither have its memory cleared nor have the applications and files temporarily disabled prior to test administration, students are not permitted to use that particular calculator during the test. Failure on the part of the Test Monitor to verify that each calculator meets the above requirements will constitute a security violation and the student’s test may be invalidated.

What Does It Mean to “Abide by the Embargo”?

Before statewide assessment and accountability results are released publicly, they are considered “embargoed.” While results can be used and discussed within the district and school before they are released publicly, there are specific rules around this use that are important for you to understand.

What is an “embargo”?

In terms of statewide assessment and accountability results, the term “embargo” means that results cannot be shared in any public forum (including social media), posted online (such as on the district website), or reflected in any public meeting minutes (such as for a school board meeting). They also cannot be shared or discussed with other staff members who should not have access to results.

What results are embargoed?

All preliminary or final statewide assessment or accountability results are considered embargoed, including:

- MCA and MTAS On-Demand Reports for individual students available during the testing window, including any data loaded into your Student Information System (SIS) or data warehouse.
- ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS early student-level results available in summer.
- Any final assessment or accountability data or reports for MCA/MTAS or ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS provided by the district during the summer or loaded into your SIS or data warehouse.

Who has access to embargoed results?

Each district determines how preliminary and final results will be shared within the district and schools, and with which staff members. However, even if you do not have direct access to the results, you may be part of meetings or discussions where embargoed results are shared.

Individual student results can be shared with parents/guardians and students for instructional purposes, depending on your district’s policy for providing these results. However, no summary results can be provided to parents/guardians or students while the results are embargoed.

How can results be used?

The following provide some examples of use that is and is not allowed during the embargo. Your District Assessment Coordinator (DAC) will provide you more information and can answer questions about how results are provided and shared in your district.

Example #1

Sharing results with staff who have a legitimate need to access the results.

- Allowed: Results are shared through internal district communications (such as via email, SIS/data warehouse, presentation).
- Not allowed: Results are shared on social media in any form, even in general terms (such as “Our students did so well this year!”)

Example #2

Using results for instructional and curriculum planning.

- Allowed: Results for a specific content area are shared with staff and discussed in planning meetings for the upcoming year.
- Not allowed: Results are discussed with another teacher in a neighboring district to see how their students performed.

Example #3

Answering questions about results.

- Allowed: Answering questions from staff who you know have access to the results. If you are not sure, verify with your DAC or building administrator first.
- Not allowed: Answering questions from parents/guardians about summary results (such as how their child did in comparison to their class).

Policy for Public and Parental/Guardian Review of Statewide Assessments

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) provides public and parental/guardian access to tests pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.30 as stated below:

Subdivision 4. Access to tests. Consistent with section 13.34, the commissioner must adopt and publish a policy to provide public and parental access for review of Minnesota-developed assessments which would not compromise the objectivity or fairness of the testing or examination process. Upon receiving a written request, the commissioner must make available to parents or guardians a copy of their student's actual responses to the test questions for their review.

Note: Because the ACCESS for ELLs and WIDA Alternate ACCESS were developed by the WIDA Consortium as a collaborative effort of consortium member states, they are not available for public or parental/guardian review.

Parental/Guardian Request for Review

Parents/guardians who want to review their child's responses to a statewide test must make a written request to the district where their child is enrolled. Inquiries should be directed to the District Assessment Coordinator (DAC). DAC contact information can be found in the Minnesota Department of Education Organization Reference Glossary ([MDE-ORG](#)), a searchable database of Minnesota's educational organizations (MDE > Data Center > Schools and Organizations (MDE-ORG)). The DAC provides the student MARSS/SSID number, test/subject, and parent/guardian name(s) and contact information securely to MDE through File Exchange in Test WES. MDE then works with the parents/guardians directly to schedule the review.

Requests must be received by MDE no later than March 1 of the next school year, but after the delivery of final Individual Student Reports (ISRs) to ensure parents/guardians have received final results.

MDE will set up a mutually agreeable time for the parent/guardian to view materials at MDE. This opportunity is open only to parents/guardians of the student. Because the student's responses and test materials are secure materials, all security procedures will apply. The review of student responses and test materials will be done under the supervision of staff not familiar with the content of the assessment.

Review of materials cannot begin until the parent/guardian and the child, if present, have signed a non-disclosure agreement. The parent/guardian is not allowed to make copies of the test or take notes from the test out of the room. At the end of the review, MDE will collect all materials that the parent/guardian and child may have generated (such as notes, solutions to problems).

Public Request for Review

Individuals other than parents/guardians who want to review a test following the release of results must make a written request to the Division of Academic Standards, Instruction and Assessment at mde.testing@state.mn.us. All security procedures will apply, including signing a non-disclosure agreement prior to reviewing any materials. The review of materials will be done under supervision and at a time mutually agreeable to the individual and MDE, and will be conducted at MDE. The individual reviewing the materials is not allowed to make copies of the test or take notes out of the room.

Document Retention Policy for Districts

The table below indicates the minimum amount of time that assessment-related documents must be retained. If your district policy is above and beyond this policy, follow your district policy. Documentation may be completed or stored electronically, but you must ensure that you can retrieve files or have copies of documentation for the required time period. For any audits or monitoring, MDE may request that districts provide this documentation.

Outside the customary test administration period, no secure test materials may remain at the district or school after the service provider’s courier picks up the test materials. MDE also follows a document retention policy; contact mde.testing@state.mn.us to review it.

| Test-Related Document | Retention Duration | Notes |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Test Administration Reports</i> | 2 years after the end of the academic school year in which testing took place | Keep on file; submit to MDE if requested for an audit or monitoring. |
| Security violations submitted through Assessment Security Records (ASR) | 2 years after the end of the academic school year in which testing took place | Submitted online to MDE in Test WES; access past year ASRs and supporting documentation as needed on Test WES. |
| Test materials security checklists | 2 years after the end of the academic school year in which testing took place | Keep on file; submit as documentation if requested for missing secure test materials. |
| Documentation of staff trainings | 2 years after the end of the academic school year in which testing took place | If trainings are completed online, completions can be tracked through service provider systems. If provided in a district/school training or on paper, keep records of staff completions following guidance in Chapter 7. Submit to MDE if requested during monitoring, for an audit, or as part of an <i>Assessment Security Records</i> submission. |
| Records of which students tested with which Test Administrators and Test Monitors, including any other trained staff present in the testing room | 2 years after the end of the academic school year in which testing took place | Keep on file; submit to MDE if requested for an audit or monitoring. |

| Test-Related Document | Retention Duration | Notes |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Parent/guardian refusal and medical excuse documentation for test codes | 2 years after the end of the academic school year in which testing took place | Keep on file; submit to MDE if requested for an audit or monitoring. |
| ACCESS grades 1–12 paper Speaking test inter-rater reliability documentation | 1 year after the end of the academic school year in which testing took place | Keep on file; submit to MDE if requested for an audit or monitoring. |
| MTAS Data Collection and Learner Characteristics Inventory forms | 1 year after the end of the academic school year in which testing took place | Keep on file after entering scores online in case there are any questions about scores/data entered. |
| Final test results reports provided by service provider (for example, rosters, Individual Student Reports (ISRs) for MCA/MTAS and ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS, and college entrance exams for which the district is requesting reimbursement) | 3 years beyond the graduation date for each grade cohort | Keep on file. Note: Service providers may have a limited number of years of results available. Districts must ensure they have downloaded electronic versions and/or filed paper copies to meet MDE and district retention policies. |

Appendix C — Monitoring and Audits

District Test Security Procedure Evaluation Rubric

Each school district must have a written district test security procedure that addresses how test security policies and procedures will be implemented in the district (see Appendix B for the requirements that must be addressed in the procedure). MDE uses the following rubric to evaluate district test security procedures.

| Categories | Required Components | Met None | Met Some | Met All |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|---------|
| 1. Training and Preparation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify coordinators and staff responsible for posting an accurate testing calendar; posted testing calendar meets requirements • Ensure all staff involved in any aspect of testing complete all required trainings annually for their role • Compile and retain training documentation • Prepare students for test administration • Prepare test rooms, including considerations for security cameras and Test Administrator/Test Monitor to student ratios | | | |
| 2. Policies and Procedures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for district monitoring of test administrations within the district • Plan for how district policy and procedure information will be provided to staff prior to testing • Plan for documentation of and communication related to reasons why students may not be testing • Plan for ensuring students take the correct test and receive the universal supports/accommodations required • Verify allowable/prohibited materials for testing • Process for getting students to correct testing locations • Policy for prohibited electronic devices • Procedures for: breaks, restroom, unexpected situations, emergencies, finishing testing • Procedures and contacts for assistance, emergencies, or errors/technical issues reported during test administration • Policy for discussing test experience with students after testing • Process for data entry of student responses/scores online • Process for handling subsequent test results | | | |
| 3. Secure Materials | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chain of custody before, during, and after testing • List of all who have access to secure materials and are responsible for distribution and collection • Location of stored secure materials before, during, and after testing • Process for returning secure materials to provider and destruction of testing tickets and scratch paper | | | |
| 4. Security Reporting and Documentation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reminder to students of test security, honesty, and integrity • Contact information provided to staff for MDE tip line/MDE • Process to report misadministrations and security violations within the school and district • Process to track which students tested with which Test Monitor/Test Administrator and other trained staff present | | | |

Training Verification Evaluation Rubric

MDE uses the following rubric to evaluate a school’s training documentation and training processes; training requirements are detailed in Chapter 7.

| Categories | Required Components | Met None | Met Some | Met All |
|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|---------|
| MDE-Required Trainings for MCA/MTAS | Each person involved in testing in the school completed all MDE-required trainings for their role and for the tests administered, including:* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment Coordinator • Other staff involved in testing and/or who have access to secure test materials but are not Test Monitors • MCA Test Monitors • MTAS Test Administrators | | | |
| MDE-Required Trainings for ACCESS/ WIDA Alternate ACCESS | Each person involved in testing in the school completed all MDE-required trainings for their role and for the tests administered, including:* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment Coordinator • Other staff involved in testing and/or who have access to secure test materials but are not Test Administrators • ACCESS Test Administrators • WIDA Alternate ACCESS Test Administrators | | | |
| District Policy and Procedure Information or Training | Statement describing how all staff involved in testing in any way received information and training on district- or school-specific test administration policies and procedures. | | N/A | |
| Timeliness of Training | Statement describing how assessment coordinator ensures training was completed for each person prior to their involvement in testing according to posted testing calendar dates. | | N/A | |

*Note: If *Test Security Training Checklists* were used and/or group trainings were held for the *Test Security Training*, the applicable information documenting each individual’s completed training(s), as outlined in Chapter 7, must be included.

Medical Excuse Documentation Evaluation Rubric

MDE uses the following rubric to evaluate a school’s documentation related to the Medical Excuse (ME) test code.

| Categories | Required Components | Met None | Met Some | Met All |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|---------|
| Documentation | <p>There is appropriate medical documentation for each ME test code indicated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation is from a licensed medical professional The medical professional is operating under the scope of an applicable professional license It includes mention of the underlying medical emergency | | | |
| Remedies and Supports | Statement describing how the underlying emergency and incapacity to participate cannot be remedied with appropriate supports or accommodations provided by the district for each ME test code indicated. | | N/A | |
| Duration of Testing Window | Statement describing the inability to provide appropriate supports or accommodations by the district exists for the duration of the testing window for each ME test code indicated. | | N/A | |
| Temporary Emergency | The ME test code was not used for the same student(s) in prior years. In the rare circumstance where the ME test code may apply for more than one year, a statement documenting this need must be included. | | N/A | |

Minnesota Statewide Assessments Monitoring List

This list outlines the areas that MDE monitors will observe or discuss during a monitoring visit of ACCESS or MCA administrations. The posting and accuracy of the school's testing calendar will be evaluated while scheduling the visit.

Interview with District/School Assessment Coordinator

- Are secure test materials kept in locked storage areas with limited staff access? Be prepared to show the MDE monitor where test materials are stored and describe who has key access to the storage area.
- How do staff receive training or information, prior to testing, on the processes that are specific to your school or district (for example, process for breaks or where to pick up materials)?
- What is the process for: a) tracking which student tested with which Test Administrator/Test Monitor, and b) tracking other trained staff present in the testing room? Be prepared to show an example of this tracking for the testing room observed.
- What is the process for providing assistance to Test Administrators/Test Monitors during testing (for example, technical issues, answering questions, or unexpected situations)?
- What is your process for noting things that happen during testing (for example, misadministrations, unexpected situations, and security violations)?

Observations

- Test Administrators/Test Monitors collect secure materials on the day of testing from locked storage, or materials are securely handed off to them (at no time are materials left unattended).
- Online test items are not visible until time of testing; test booklets/books remain closed until students are instructed to begin.
- All materials related to explicit language instruction or the language expectations of an academic content area (ACCESS) or all academic or instructional materials (MCA) on walls or desks are covered or taken down, even if not related to the domain/subject being tested.
- All devices not used for test administration are collected or put away and turned off, including cell phones, other mobile devices, and wearable technology.
- Only materials authorized for use during testing are on student desks during the administration.
- Student questions about directions or testing procedures are answered before testing begins.
- Throughout test administration, directions are provided in line with guidance in the applicable *Test Administrator's Script* (ACCESS) or *Testing Directions* (MCA), including providing scripted instructions.
- Only students who are testing or who finish testing during the current testing session are present in the testing room.
- Designated staff members are available to Test Administrators/Test Monitors for troubleshooting, providing assistance, and answering questions.

- The testing room is supervised by at least one trained district staff member at all times.
- If a student needs to leave the room (restroom, illness, etc.), only one student is allowed to leave at a time, or there is a plan in place for staff to monitor multiple students.
- If a student needs to leave the room, the online test is exited/content is covered (items not viewable) or the test booklet/book is closed. The test is resumed/uncovered or materials are reopened upon return.
- Students are allowed to work at their own pace without being pressured to finish or slow down.
- Test Administrators/Test Monitors actively monitor test administration by moving through the room and observing that students are working independently.
- Student questions during testing are addressed appropriately, using the *Test Administrator’s Script (ACCESS)* or *Testing Directions (MCA)*.
- The Test Administrator/Test Monitor maintains order, the testing room is quiet, and disruptions are kept to a minimum.
- There is one Test Administrator/Test Monitor for approximately every 30 students for ACCESS Reading and Listening and MCA, or there is one Test Administrator for every 15 students for ACCESS Writing.
- Enough space is allowed between students in the testing room to ensure students work independently. If space is limited, barriers/screens may be used or additional Test Administrators/Test Monitors may be present.
- When students finish testing, the school’s process is followed with minimal disruption.
- If students remain in the testing room once they are finished with testing, students work on appropriate paper materials, read a paper book, or sit quietly.
- Secure test materials are collected at the end of the testing session and properly secured.
- Test Administrators/Test Monitors account for all materials before returning them to the District or School Assessment Coordinator or designated staff member.

MTAS Field Audit Checklist

This list outlines the areas that MTAS Field Auditors will observe or ask the Test Administrator about during an observation.

Prior to Test Administration

- Does the student meet the requirements for the MTAS specified in the *Eligibility Requirements for the Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS)*?
- Did you receive training for administering the MTAS (by completing the online training individually or in a group training arranged by the school)?

Testing Environment

- Distractions are kept to a minimum during the administration of the MTAS.
- Information that might clue the answers to the tasks is removed from the environment.

During Administration

- The test is administered individually.
- The student is adequately prepared for the administration and is comfortable.
- The Test Administrator reads/delivers each task according to the script without deviation.
 - If observing Science and/or Reading MTAS, the Test Administrator correctly transitions to administering field test tasks 10–15.
- The Test Administrator reads/delivers each task in an appropriate manner for the individual student (for example, the presentation of the task appears to allow the student to demonstrate knowledge and skills to the best of their ability).
- The administration is free of any clueing that might impact the response.
- Adaptations to the test materials prepared for the student preserve the construct of the task(s).

Scoring

- The Test Administrator scores tasks appropriately according to the script.
 - If observing a Science and/or Reading MTAS administration, the Test Administrator records the student response for field test tasks 10–15.
- Performance tasks stop after a task score had been clearly identified, following the task script at each score point.
 - If observing a Science and/or Reading MTAS administration, the administration of the current task stops after the student provides their response for field test tasks 10–15.

- The Test Administrator provides a copy of scores and, if administering Science and/or Reading MTAS, student responses for the tasks observed during the audit visit.
- Exact agreement or adjacent agreement is found for each task observed.
 - If observing a Science and/or Reading MTAS administration, exact agreement is found for each recorded student response on field test tasks 10–15.
- The Test Administrator has complete and accurate records and materials necessary for assigning a valid score for the student.
- The Test Administrator understands the district’s procedure for entering MTAS scores online (for example, the Test Administrator enters the scores in PearsonAccess Next, the Test Administrator provides the score sheet(s) to a central location for data entry, etc.).

Test Administrator Questionnaire Following Administration

- Did the administration training prepare you effectively?
- Did you use the object lists to present the tasks for mathematics and/or science?
- Were you provided adequate time to prepare materials for the MTAS administration?
- Were the directions for scoring the tasks clear? If the administration being observed includes Science and/or Reading MTAS, ask the following for field test tasks 10–15:
 - Were the directions for recording student responses clear?
 - Did you decide to adapt the test materials, and if so, how?
 - For science, did you use the object lists to present tasks 10–15? If so, do you have any suggestions to improve the format of that part of the object list?
 - Did the administration training prepare you effectively for the new format of tasks?
 - What went well during the administration and recording of student responses?
 - What needs to be improved to ease the administration and recording of student responses?
 - What would you like MDE to know about the changes in the available test materials?

Appendix D — Key Testing Terms

Key Testing Terms

General Assessment Overview

- **Accommodations and Supports:** Changes in how students participate in assessments. These changes may be built into the online test, provided as part of the administration, or require paper test materials. They do not alter the construct intended to be measured by the assessment or the integrity of test results.
 - *Universal Supports:* Available for all students on standards-based and English language proficiency accountability assessments; tailor the experience based on student needs or preferences. Universal supports are divided into three categories: tools, administrative considerations, and accessibility supports.
 - *Accommodations:* Only available for students with an IEP or 504 plan on standards-based and English language proficiency accountability assessments; provide changes in the way a test is administered and are meant to reduce or eliminate the effects of a disability.
- **Assessment Security Record (ASR):** System accessed through Test Web Edit System (WES) for communication and recordkeeping between the district and MDE related to test security, monitoring, and audits. District Assessment Coordinators (DACs) submit security violations to MDE through the ASR.
- **Criterion-Referenced Test:** Customized achievement test that describes student performance in terms of a specific standard (for example, driver's license exams, which require would-be drivers to achieve a certain score to earn a license). Both the standards-based accountability assessments (MCA/MTAS) and the English language proficiency accountability assessments (ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS) are examples of criterion-referenced tests, as they are aligned to the Minnesota Academic Standards and the WIDA English Language Development Standards, respectively.
- **District Assessment Coordinator (DAC):** The DAC is the primary person in each district who oversees the implementation of statewide assessments, which includes managing required trainings, developing district policies and procedures, and ensuring test security is maintained. The DAC also serves as the district's main contact with the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), the service providers, and district staff regarding statewide assessment and any questions or issues that may arise.
- **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA):** A reauthorization of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which initiated the current system for accountability, reporting, school improvement, and recognition used in Minnesota.
- **Individual Student Reports (ISRs):** Reports that describe an individual student's performance in terms of overall results and performance level for each subject or proficiency level for each domain.
- **Service Provider:** The testing companies or educational organizations that MDE contracts with to administer statewide assessments. Pearson is the service provider for the standards-based accountability assessments (MCA/MTAS), and WIDA and Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) are the

service providers for the English language proficiency accountability assessments (ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS).

- **Test Administration Report (TAR):** The form districts use to document special circumstances, misadministrations, and invalidations.

English Language Proficiency Accountability Assessments

- **ACCESS for ELLs (ACCESS):** An English language proficiency accountability assessment based on the WIDA English Language Development Standards for listening, reading, speaking, and writing.
- **Can Do Descriptors:** An educator resource that highlights what language learners can do at various stages of language development across different content areas.
- **Data Recognition Corporation (DRC):** The service provider that WIDA subcontracts with to support administration of the ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS.
- **Domains:** The four subtests—Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking—that are assessed by the ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS.
- **English Language Development (ELD) Standards:** WIDA-developed expectations that Minnesota has adopted as statewide ELD standards. These standards reflect the social and academic dimensions of acquiring a second language that are expected of English learners in grade levels PreK–12. The ELD standards provide a connection between language development and academic content.
- **English Learner (EL):** Term used to identify students learning English as an additional language as indicated in enrollment data submitted to MDE. May also appear as ELL (English language learner).
- **Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP):** A language instruction educational program for English learners that addresses state academic and ELD standards.
- **Language Proficiency:** Students are assigned a proficiency level based on their scale score. For ACCESS, there are six English language proficiency levels: 1—Entering, 2—Emerging, 3—Developing, 4—Expanding, 5—Bridging, 6—Reaching. For WIDA Alternate ACCESS, proficiency level scores will describe a student’s performance in terms of the five WIDA Alternate English Language Proficiency Levels: 1—Entering, 2—Emerging, 3—Developing, 4—Expanding, and 5—Bridging.
- **Model Performance Indicators:** An educator resource that identifies and describes the language abilities a student already has, the skills a student can work on, and the instructional supports that might be effective as a student develops new language abilities.
- **Multilingual Learner (MLL):** Term used to describe students developing proficiency in multiple languages. This includes students identified as English learners, former English learners, and students enrolled in bilingual education programs.
- **Performance Definitions:** An educator resource that outlines what English learners can do at each proficiency level in each domain.
- **WIDA:** The service provider for the ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS.

- **WIDA Alternate ACCESS:** Beginning in 2023–24, the WIDA Alternate ACCESS is aligned to the WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework: 2020 Edition. This updated assessment will have proficiency levels and cut scores developed during standard setting in the summer of 2024.
- **WIDA Secure Portal:** The secure WIDA website used to access resources and training courses on test administration, technology, and reporting. Note: Staff must also complete MDE-required trainings in the Learning Management System (LMS) in addition to WIDA trainings.
- **WIDA Assessment Management System (WIDA AMS):** The website used for managing student data and online test sessions, indicating the number of online testers, ordering paper test materials, and accessing score reports for ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS. DRC manages the WIDA AMS website.

Standards-Based Accountability Assessments

- **Achievement Level:** A range of scores on a test are assigned to a level that describes a student’s performance in relation to the Minnesota Academic Standards. There are four achievement levels on the standards-based accountability assessments: Does Not Meet Standards, Partially Meets Standards, Meets Standards, and Exceeds Standards.
- **Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs):** An educator resource that describes the four levels of achievement on the MCA or MTAS using the Minnesota Academic Standards.
- **Alternate MCA:** A redesigned alternate assessment in development that will replace the Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS) in science in 2024–25 and reading in 2025–26; the timeline for mathematics is still to be determined.
- **Benchmark Report:** A report educators can use to learn about school- or district-level performance on each benchmark from the Minnesota Academic Standards that was assessed on the current year’s MCA.
- **Benchmark Achievement Level Descriptors:** An educator resource for reading and mathematics that can be used with benchmark reports; the ALDs describe the knowledge and skills students typically demonstrate across the four achievement levels for each benchmark from the standards.
- **Learning Management System (LMS):** The learning management system accessed from PearsonAccess Next where district and school staff complete trainings in preparation for administering statewide assessments.
- **Minnesota Academic Standards:** Statewide expectations that identify the knowledge and skills all K–12 students are expected to achieve by the end of a grade level or grade band.
- **Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA):** A standards-based accountability assessment for reading, mathematics, and science based on the Minnesota Academic Standards.
- **Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS):** The alternate standards-based accountability assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.
- **Pearson:** The service provider for MCA and MTAS.
- **PearsonAccess Next:** The secure system used for administering MCA and MTAS. Tasks completed in PearsonAccess Next include managing users, setting up MCA test sessions, entering MTAS data online,

and accessing results. District and school resources, user guides, trainings, and student resources are posted on the non-secure portion of the website.

- **TestNav:** The Pearson testing app students use to take online MCAs. Staff also use TestNav to enter students' responses from MCA paper tests.
- **Training Center:** The Pearson system used by district and school technology staff to prepare their building technology infrastructures for administering the online MCA.
- **Subscore Report:** Report available publicly on PearsonAccess Next that provides school-, district-, and state-level subscore data, also known as strand/substrand performance levels, on the MCA.

Resources and MDE Systems

- **Assessment Secure Reports:** A secure location on the MDE website where districts can view test results.
- **District and School Student Results (DSR/SSR):** Data files that contain all student-level data from the assessments, including demographic information, achievement level information, and test scores.
- **Ed-Fi:** MDE has been transitioning student-level data submission to Ed-Fi technology. For school year 2023–24, districts must continue to dually submit their information via both the MARSS A/B files and the Ed-Fi data syncs until they are certified to sync with Ed-Fi data only. Both MARSS A/B files and Ed-Fi data syncs are validated through MDE's MARSS WES system.
- **Graduation Requirements Records (GRR):** The MDE system used by districts to request reimbursement for college entrance exams (ACT or SAT) for eligible grade 11 and grade 12 students.
- **Minnesota Automated Reporting Student Systems Web Edit System (MARSS WES):** The MDE system districts use to submit enrollment information to MDE through MARSS A/B files, along with Ed-Fi.
- **Minnesota Department of Education–Organization Reference Glossary (MDE-ORG):** A searchable database with organizational details on the MDE website, including contact information for DACs and other district roles.
- **Precode:** The term used to describe data files sent to service providers (Pearson and DRC) with student and test eligibility information.
- **Student Assessment History Report:** A report that allows districts to look up the assessment history for any student enrolled in their district.
- **Student Resources:** Since districts are required to ensure students are familiar with the assessments, a variety of student resources are available, including the following:
 - For ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS:
 - The **test demo** is available for each online ACCESS grade-level cluster to show students how to navigate different features of the test. It is recommended that students watch the test demo before taking the practice test.
 - The **practice test** can be used to familiarize students with the online ACCESS test format. These items are very easy but will help students become familiar with the test environment. Note that the practice test can also be used to familiarize students with accommodations that are embedded in the test.

- The **sample items** are recommended for students who have experience taking the ACCESS Online. The sample items can be used to familiarize students with the content and grade-level appropriate language development expectations. These items are representative of the item difficulty a student will experience on the actual test. Sample items are also available for WIDA Alternate ACCESS, ACCESS Paper, and the braille ACCESS accommodation.
 - For MCA/MTAS:
 - The **Student Readiness Tools (SRTs)** are the resources used to familiarize students and educators with the online and paper MCAs. Teacher’s guides for each resource are available to provide guidance and tips for educators using the SRTs with their students. **Stand-alone online calculators** and **formula sheets** are available for MCA to allow students to practice using them outside of the item samplers.
 - For MTAS, **sample test materials** are available to prepare both Test Administrators and students for test administration. SRTs for the new Alternate MCA will be available starting with science in 2024–25.
- **Test Results Summary:** District- and school-level assessment data available by grade for the standards-based accountability assessments and the English language proficiency accountability assessments.
- **Test Specifications:** Summary blueprint for test construction, specifying the portion of questions for each reporting category and outlining the essential features of the test design to provide consistency and transparency across test forms for the life of each assessment.
- **Test Web Edit System (Test WES):** The MDE system DACs and other district staff use throughout the year for activities related to data editing and test security.
- **Testing 1, 2, 3:** This website contains resources for assessment and data literacy that can be used and shared with district and school staff who interpret results from the statewide assessments and other district and school assessments.

Upon request, the information in this manual will be made available in alternative formats.